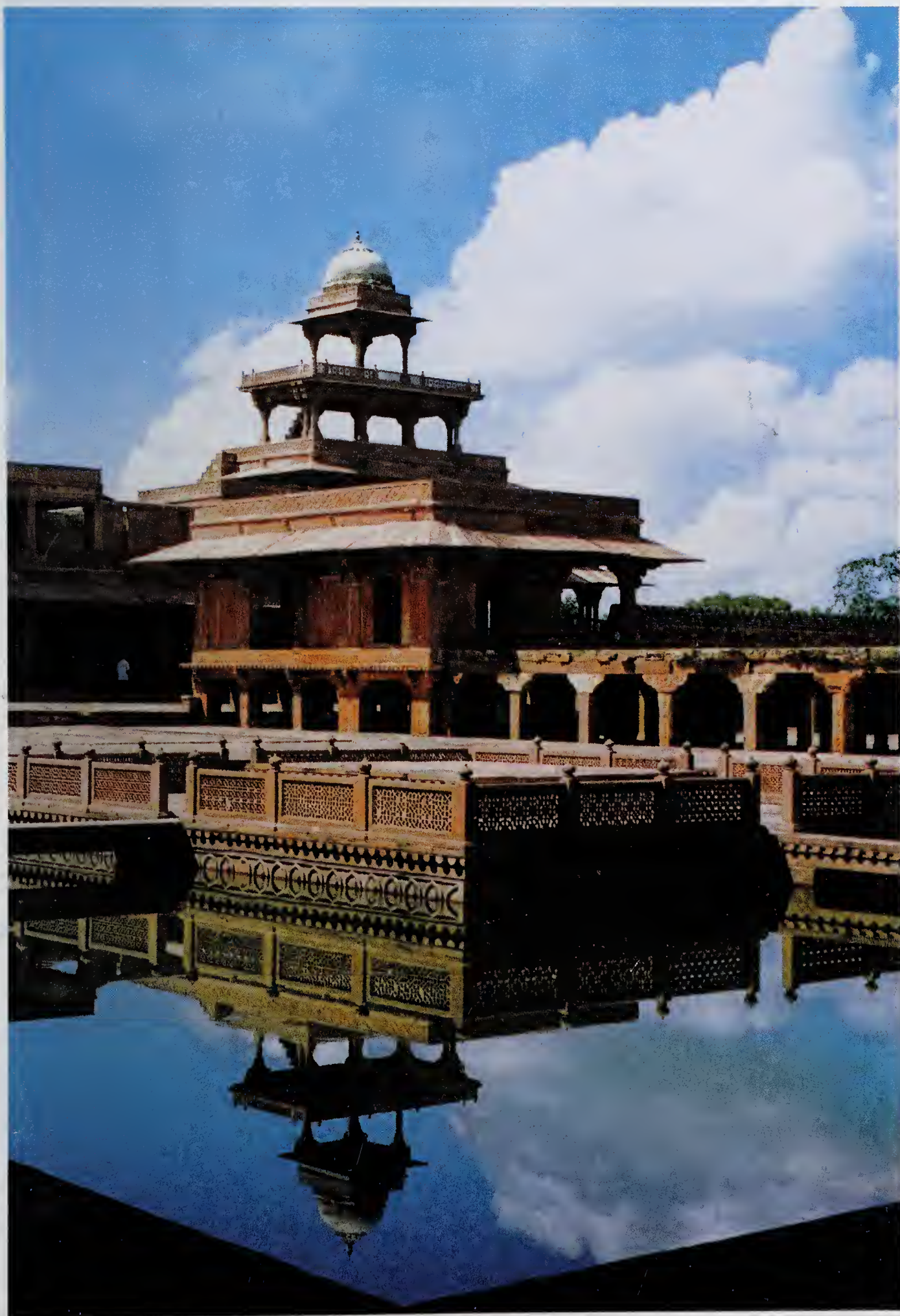


World Heritage Series

FATEHPUR SIKRI



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

FATEHPUR SIKRI

Fatehpur Sikri is the third in a series of travel guides being published by the Archaeological Survey of India with the aim of introducing the visitor to the World Heritage Monuments in India.

Extensive historical research and a focus on architectural details make this book an invaluable companion for anyone wishing to explore the imperial city Emperor Akbar built and then abandoned after 14 years. The guide takes the traveller to the many monuments within the imperial palace complex, and to the *dargah* of the Sufi saint, Shaikh Salim Chishti and other monuments around it.

Specially commissioned photographs, architectural illustrations and easy-to-follow site maps make the book a visual delight.

Also included is a comprehensive section of all the information a traveller needs to make his way to Fatehpur Sikri – from when to visit to where to stay, from tourism information offices to airline offices.

- Introduction
- Gateways and Bazaars
- Imperial Palace Complex
- Imperial Harem
- Jami Masjid and Chishti Monuments
- Environs of Jami Masjid
- Hiran Minar and Waterworks
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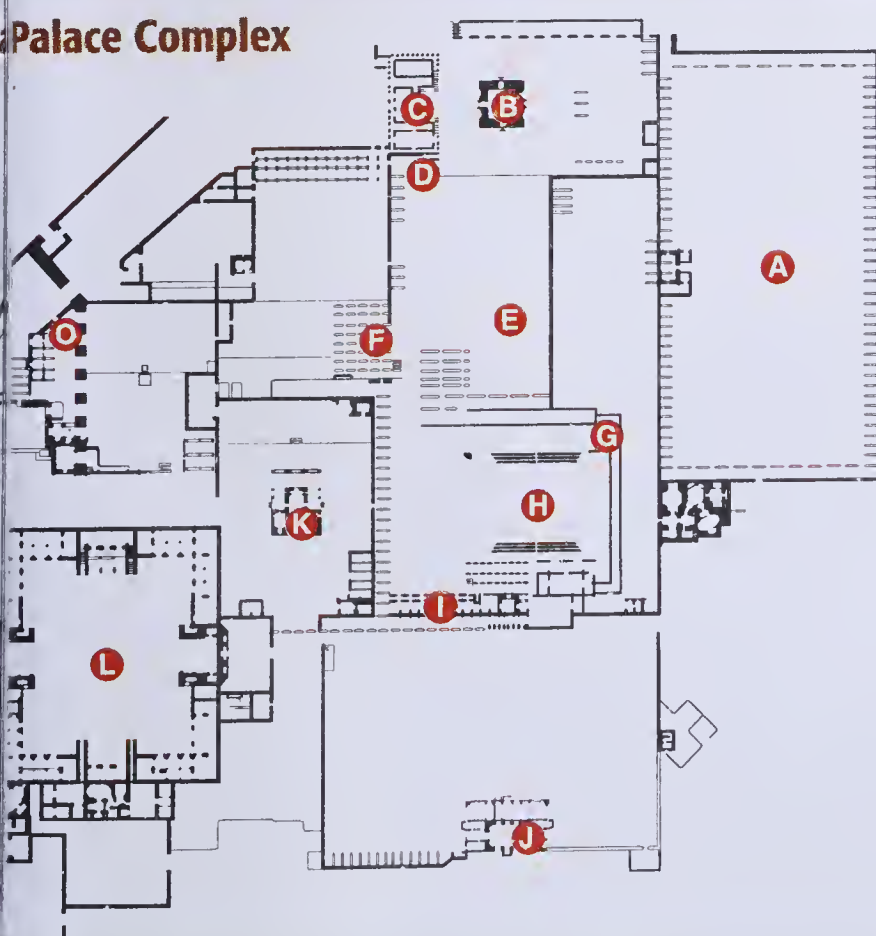


Key

1. Tansen's Baradari
2. Bazaar with Naubat-Khana
3. Taksal
4. Diwan-i-Am
5. Imperial Palace Complex
6. Daftar Khana
7. Imperial Harem
8. Shah Quli's Baoli
9. Hakim's Hammam
10. Jami Masjid
11. Shaikh Salim's Tomb
12. Buland Darwaza
13. Badshahi Darwaza
14. Hiran Minar

MAP NOT TO SCALE

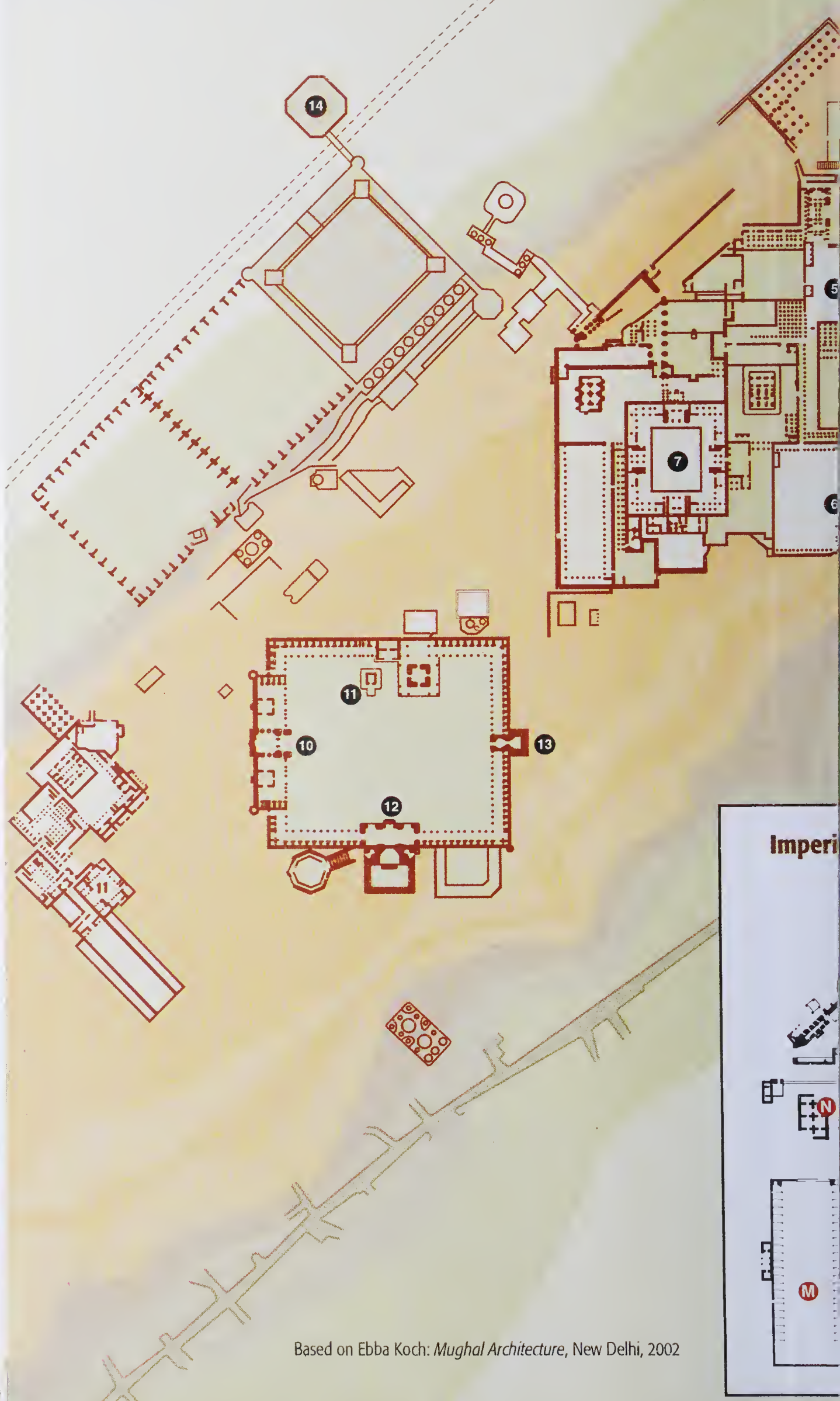
Palace Complex



Key

- A Diwan-i-Am
- B Diwan-i-Khass
- C Ankh Michauli
- D Astrologer's Seat
- E Pachisi courtyard
- F Panch Mahal
- G Turkish Sultana's Pavilion
- H Anup Talao
- I Khwabgah
- J Daftar Khana
- K Maryam's House
- L Jodh Bai's Palace
- M Lower Haram Sara
- N Birbal's House
- O Nagina Masjid

Fatehpur Sikri



Based on Ebba Koch: *Mughal Architecture*, New Delhi, 2002

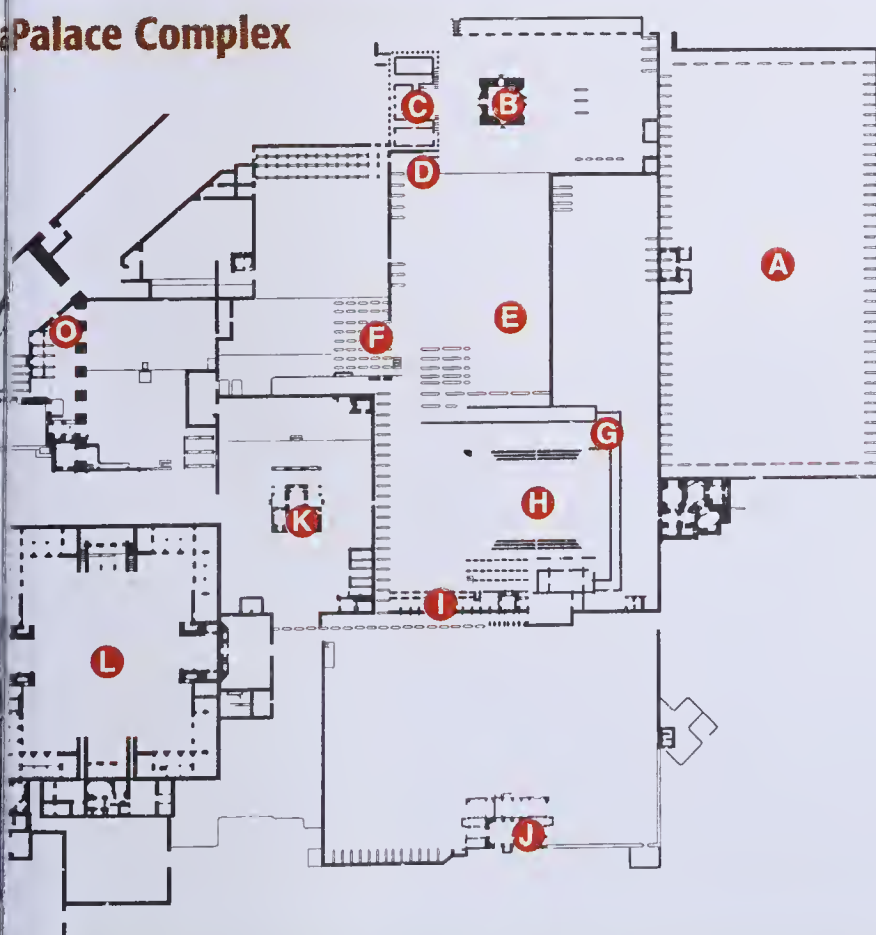


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World Heritage Series

FATEHPUR SIKRI

Based on the text of
S A A Rizvi



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Foreword

Fatehpur Sikri is the third guidebook in a series being brought out by the Archaeological Survey of India to showcase the 16 World Cultural Heritage Sites maintained by them. Fatehpur Sikri is one of India's most prominent tourist sites and due to its proximity to Agra, also one of the most visited.

In order to maintain the pristine glory of the complex, the ASI has drawn up an elaborate Master Plan for Fatehpur Sikri. Efforts are being made to ensure that, although all tourist facilities are provided, the ambience of the heritage city is maintained. Extensive conservation work is being carried out, including the landscaping and greening of all open spaces within the complex, and a special effort is also being made to remove all unauthorised structures within the medieval city.

Founded in AD 1571 by Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar (1542-1605), the third Mughal ruler of India, this sprawling capital city is located 37 kms west of Agra. This medieval city built in honour of Shaikh Salim-ud-din Chishti was the capital of Akbar between 1571-85.

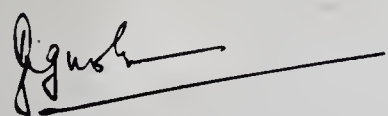
Exhibiting the vibrant features of sixteenth century Mughal architecture, the majestic monuments dot the slopes of the dominantly sandstone ridge overlooking the vast (now dried up) lake towards the north-west. This city, enclosed by a 11 kms long fortification wall pierced with numerous gateways, accommodates the remains of the ancient township built for common people to the south of the ridge. The imperial edifices built of sandstone, however, are clustered at the top of the ridge and include halls, palaces, gardens, pleasure resorts, *hammams* (baths), mosques and tombs, apart from the remains of the quarters for noblemen.

Fatehpur Sikri stands out as one of the best examples of medieval urban planning, particularly in its blending of religious, secular and defence architecture. The continuance of this magnificent tradition can be seen in Lahore, Agra and Delhi.

The palace complex and the Jami Masjid are some of the early projects undertaken at Fatehpur Sikri (1569-74) and together denote the blend of elegance and magnificence in Mughal architecture. The famous Buland Darwaza was added later to commemorate the victory of Akbar over Gujarat.

Among other important buildings are the tomb of Shaikh Salim Chishti, the Naubat or Naqqar Khana (drum house), Taksal (mint), Karkhanas (royal workshops), Khazana (treasury), Hakim's Quarters, Diwan-i-Khass, Diwan-i-Am, Maryam's House, also called Sunahra Makan, Jodh Bai's Palace, Birbal's House, etc.

Under a sustained field archaeological research programme, explorations and excavations have been carried out since 1977-78, revealing hitherto unknown facets of the cultural heritage of this medieval city.



JAGMOHAN

Minister of Tourism and Culture
Government of India

In 1571, Akbar decided to build himself a capital city. For it, he chose Sikri, a village on the road between the Mughals' imperial centre at Agra and their spiritual centre at Ajmer.

Unlike Agra that was a thriving centre of trade, Sikri was just a little village which had first come to Mughal notice when Babur, triumphant after defeating Rana Sanga at Khanuwa in 1527, according to a popular belief, named the village Shukri, meaning thanksgiving.

As chronicles attest, Akbar's choice of this site was largely governed by the presence there of Shaikh Salim Chishti, a Sufi saint, who had predicted that the heirless Akbar would soon be blessed with not one but three sons. By situating his imperial capital on ground hallowed by the popular mystic, Akbar sought to attach the charisma of the Sufis to his imperial authority.

Fatehpur Sikri reflected Akbar's design and architectural philosophy. This 'Akbari' style of architecture consisted of a synthesis of earlier styles, Timurid, Persian and Indian. The lavish use of red sandstone sought to minimise the stylistic clashes consequent to the mixing of these disparate elements.

The emperor's own interest in the construction was all-consuming: 'He even quarried stone himself, alongside the workmen', says Father Monserrate, the Jesuit priest who visited the city in 1580. Built by a single ruler in a relatively short span of fifteen years, there was thus a certain architectural

Right:
**The main
entrance
arch of
Jami Masjid**





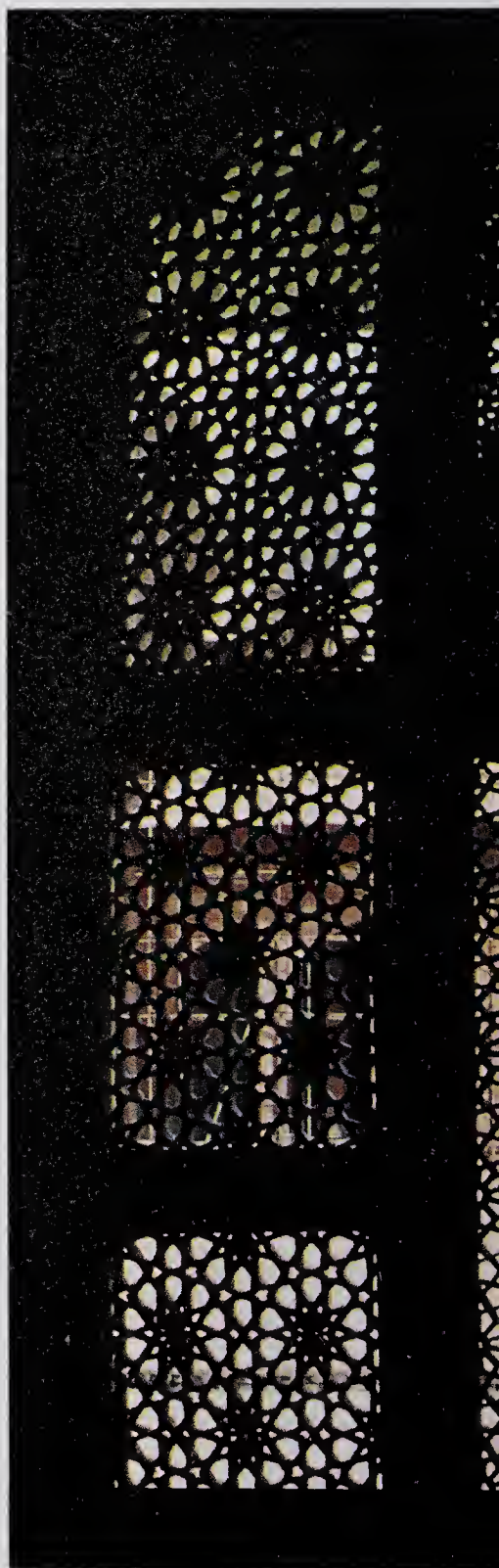
coherence to the city conceived as a courtly centre.

Fatehpur Sikri rose rapidly from a nondescript village to a thriving centre of commerce once Akbar's court took its seat here in 1571-72. Historians estimate that the total population of Fatehpur Sikri in 1580 was just short of a quarter of a million. In 1585, the English traveller Ralph Fitch visited the city at its apogee, and wrote, 'Agra and Fatepore are two very great cities, either of them much greater than London and very populous.'

The new city had significant resonances with Akbar's early life as king. It was at Fatehpur Sikri in 1569 that his son and heir, Salim, was born; it was from here that Akbar marched out to Gujarat in 1572, and returned victorious the following year. To celebrate this triumph, the emperor renamed Sikri as Fatehpur, meaning city of victory, and endowed it with a monumental commemorative doorway, the Buland Darwaza.

However, in 1585, only fourteen years after it was built, Akbar and his court left Fatehpur Sikri never to return again. Political exigencies made him move his capital to Lahore till 1598.

The popular explanation that Fatehpur Sikri was suddenly abandoned because the supply of water failed is unlikely, given the otherwise meticulous planning that went into the making of the city. A replenishable water source must have been one of the first things Akbar's city planners took account of.

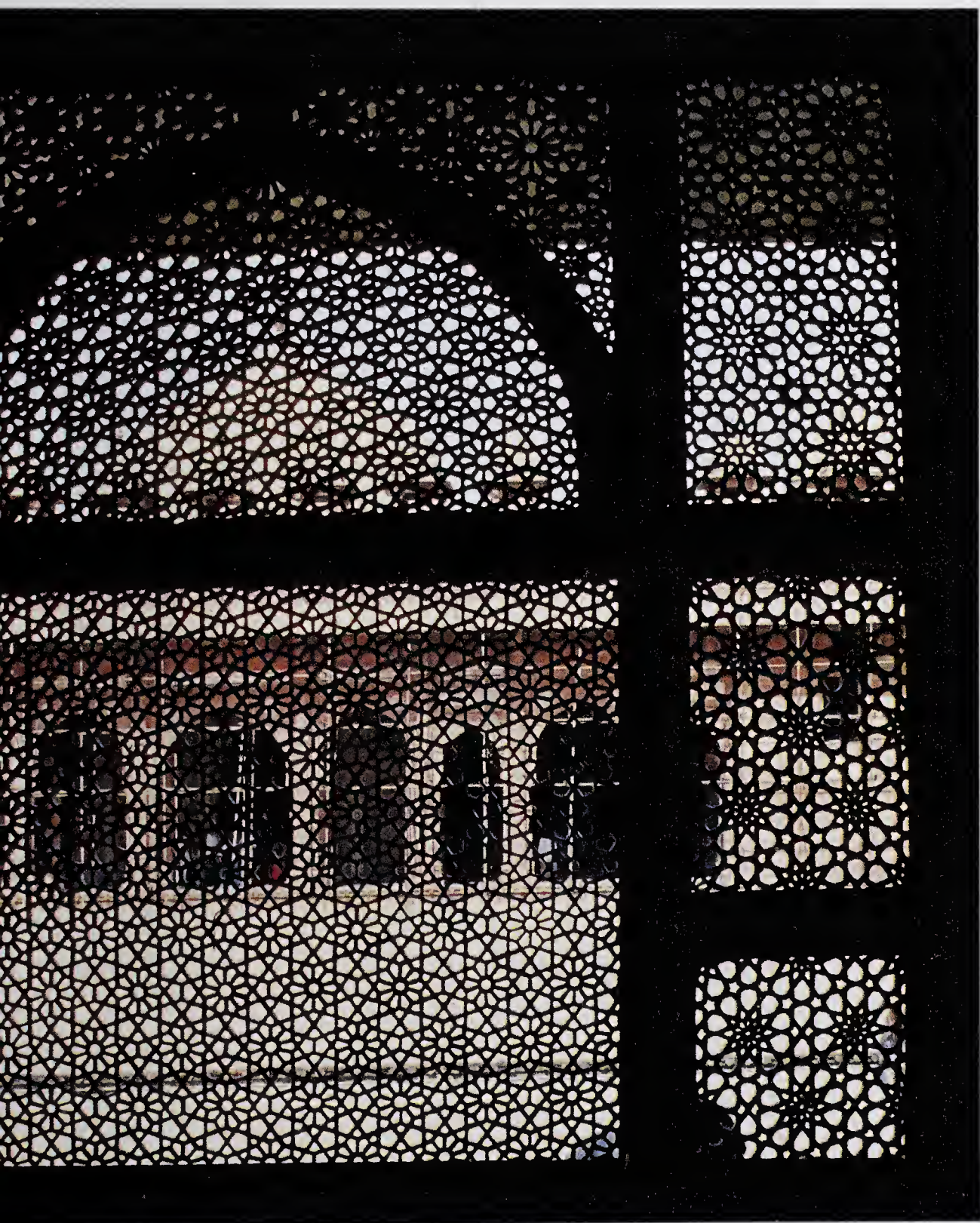


The more plausible explanation is that Akbar never really intended to establish a permanent capital. He shifted court when he felt necessary. Fatehpur Sikri was temporarily suited to Akbar's scheme of imperial expansion – it was close to Rajasthan and Gujarat as well as the Gangetic plain – allowing him to swoop wheresoever the call of dominion took him.

When he left for Lahore in 1585, Akbar took the life from Fatehpur Sikri, leaving it a vast ghost city.

Below:

The *jalis* surrounding the tomb of Salim Chishti resemble carved ivory rather than chiselled marble



Gateways and Bazaars

**Naubat Khana, where the imperial drums were beaten
to announce the arrival of the emperor**



Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar's imperial capital, was planned as the cultural, commercial and administrative centre of the empire. Strategically situated, it afforded the emperor and his court the security of Agra Fort within a day's march. Fatehpur Sikri, following the general pattern of medieval Indian towns, was provided with walls, some 6 kms long, which enclosed the city from north to south-west; while the western side was protected by a lake, now largely dry. The walls were loop-holed and there was a path some 2.5 metres wide inside to allow soldiers to pass to and fro.





Left:
**Agra
Gateway,
the entry
point in to
Fatehpur Sikri**

Historian Glenn D Lowry says that, seen from the lake, Fatehpur Sikri's plan takes on a coherence which is invisible from the western approach along the main road. 'From the Hiran Minar, which is axially aligned to the Hathi Pol, the core of the city develops in a triangular manner towards the ridge with the north-east corner of the Diwan-i-Am forming one edge of the city and the south-west corner of the Jamī Masjid the other. Access into the city was carefully controlled by a series of gates or barriers that progressively restricted movement from the public spaces into the zones of the city reserved for the royal family and nobility'.

The Gateways

Beginning from Delhi Darwaza in Sikri village, and moving westward lie the city's gateways: the Lal (Red),

the Akbarabad (Agra), the Suraj (Sun) or Bir, the Ghandar (Moon), and the Gwalior Darwazas. Beyond these, further to the west, are the Terha (Crooked) and the Ajmeri Darwazas. Delhi, Agra, Gwalior, and Ajmer Gateways are so called because the roads to these towns led out through them. The gateways are all identical in design but the Agra Gateway is best preserved and most frequently used by the modern tourist coming either from Agra or Bharatpur.

Inside the Agra Gateway, abutting on the wall to the right is a large irregular pentagonal enclosure containing ruined cloisters. Locally known as the *kotwali* or police checkpost, it was a **carvansera**i in Akbar's time. William Finch, a European traveller who visited Fatehpur Sikri in 1610 by when it had been long abandoned, says, 'Close within the

gate is the King's *sarai*, with large stone lodgings but much ruined'.

To the right, behind the caravanserai, the eastern end of the Fatehpur ridge rises steeply. On its slopes and summit are the remains of some elegant quarters, which were probably inhabited by the nobility. Most interesting and best preserved of these is a charming pavilion of red sandstone called **Tansen's Baradari**, although it certainly was not the residence of the illustrious musician. The road leads to the attractive Dak Bungalow of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), built by Lord Curzon (1898-1905). The Dak Bungalow is worth visiting if only for the magnificent view it offers of Sikri village and Delhi Darwaza.

The road from Agra Gateway to the imperial palaces runs through a walled enclosure, usually known as the Naubat Khana or Naqqar Khana.

Naubat Khana was a place where drums were beaten to make important announcements, and in this case also to herald the emperor's appearances in the Diwan-i-Am. However according to archaeologist SAA Rizvi, this enclosure was part of a *chahar suq* or a market arranged around a square. The triple arched gate of this *bazaar* is based on the Tin Darwaza of Ahmedabad (first half of 15th century).

A little ahead on the right is a huge structure with rubble masonry walls, popularly called **Taksal** or mint, but most likely it was the **Karkhana** or workshop

Below:
Tansen's Baradari was probably the residence of some important nobleman



where goods – both for daily use as well as luxury items – were manufactured for the court. The Taksal was probably just a part of the Karkhana and it is possible that gold and presentation coins were minted here.

To the right, behind the Karkhana are remains of the imperial kitchen. Among these ruins is a large plastered tank, called **Hauz-i-Shirin** or sweet tank, which collects rainwater. According to *Ain-i-Akbari*, while Akbar only drank the water of Ganga, he allowed rainwater to be used in preparing the food for the court.

Not far from the Hauz-i-Shirin, stand the remains of the **Yatish Khana** or House of Muhammad Baqir. He was the *sufrahi* or

Superintendent of the Imperial Table whose duty was to wait upon the emperor at his meals.

South-east of the Karkhana is a small, ruined building, faced with red sandstone, popularly called **Khazana** or treasury. This is being converted to accommodate the ASI Museum.

In a depression to the south-west of this house, are tolerably preserved masonry buildings called the **Hakims' Quarters**, believed to have been the residence of the three Hakim brothers. Hailing from Gilan on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea, their knowledge of philosophy and the sciences, earned them the title of Hakim in Akbar's court.

Facing Page:
A miniature painting of Akbar supervising the construction of Fatehpur Sikri

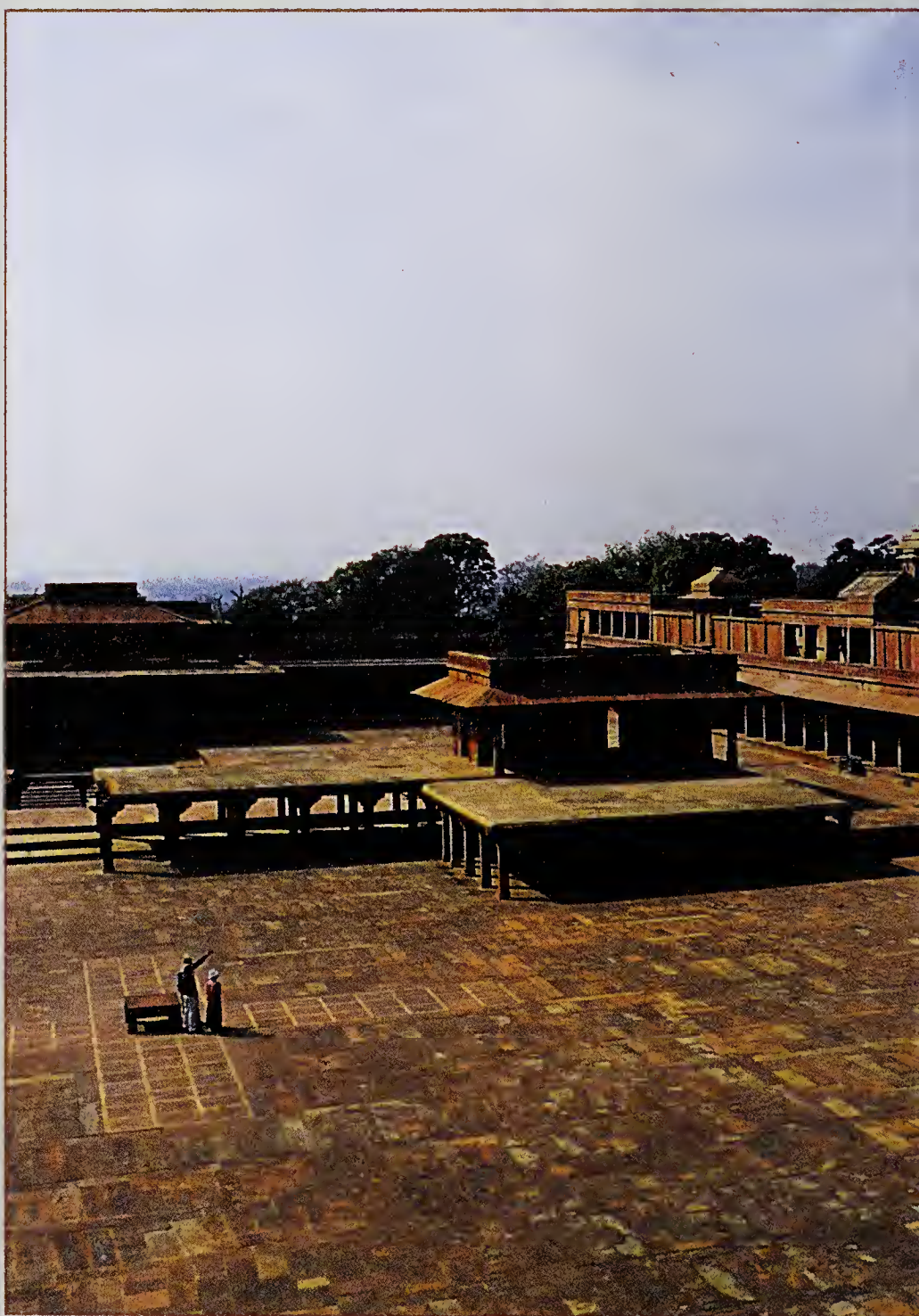
Below:
The royal workshop situated just behind the ASI Dak Bungalow





Imperial Palace Complex

**Bird's eye-view of the Imperial
Palace complex**



Abul Fazl, Akbar's court chronicler, describes the emperor's architects and designers as lofty-minded mathematicians and says the emperor's style of architecture was understandable only to the scientifically oriented. According to contemporary historians, Akbar took a great interest in the building of Fatehpur Sikri and probably also dictated its architectural style.



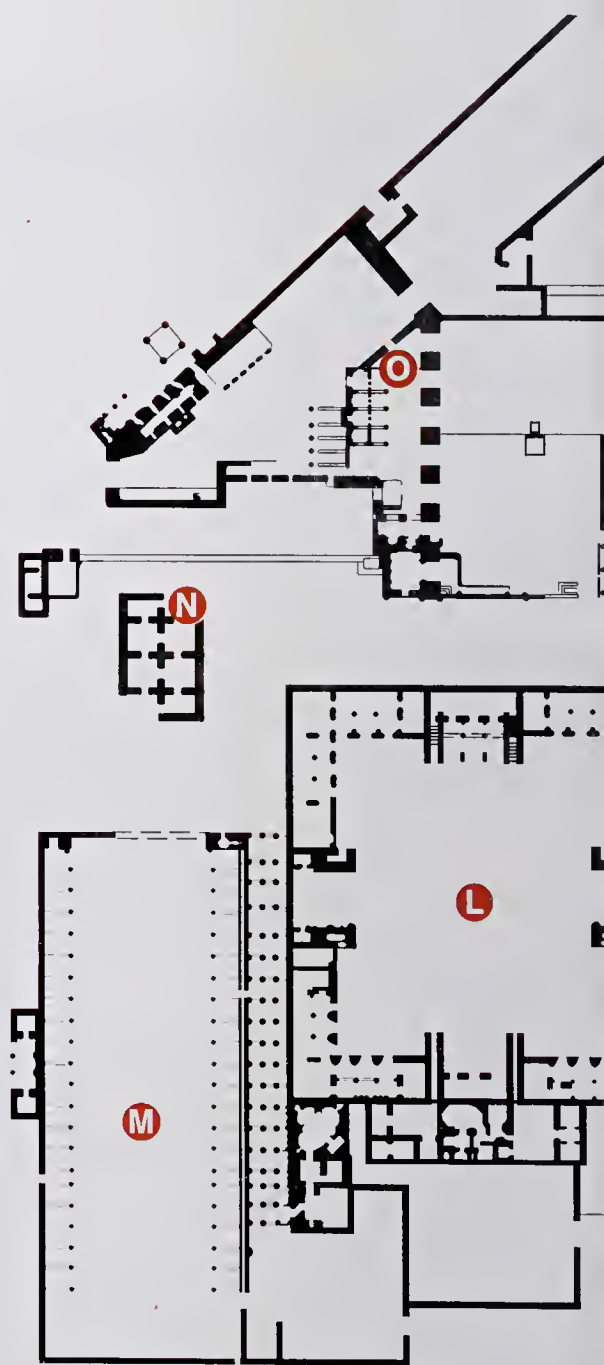
Though elements within the Imperial Palace complex can be related to various traditions, it does not as a whole adhere to any single style or pattern. Hence, in many respects it represents a unique and mysterious masterpiece. The Imperial Palace complex, consisting of the Treasury, the offices, the Daulat Khana, the Haram Sara or ladies' palace, now appears irregular and disjointed; but in Akbar's time it was part of a well-connected and highly-planned complex. The complex, with Hathi Pol for its main entrance, was divided into three parts: The *mardana* or men's section, the *zanana* or women's area, and the official area. The main units of Haram Sara were earlier connected to the Daulat Khana by screened corridors and were closed entirely from the treasuries and the offices. Another viaduct connected the Daulat Khana to Hathi Pol and beyond to the Hiran Minar.

Seeking to revive the splendours of Persian court ceremonial made famous by his ancestor Timur, Akbar planned the complex on Persian principles. But the influences of his adopted land came through in the typically Indian embellishments. The easy availability of

sandstone in the neighbouring areas of Fatehpur Sikri, also meant that all the buildings here were made of this red stone.

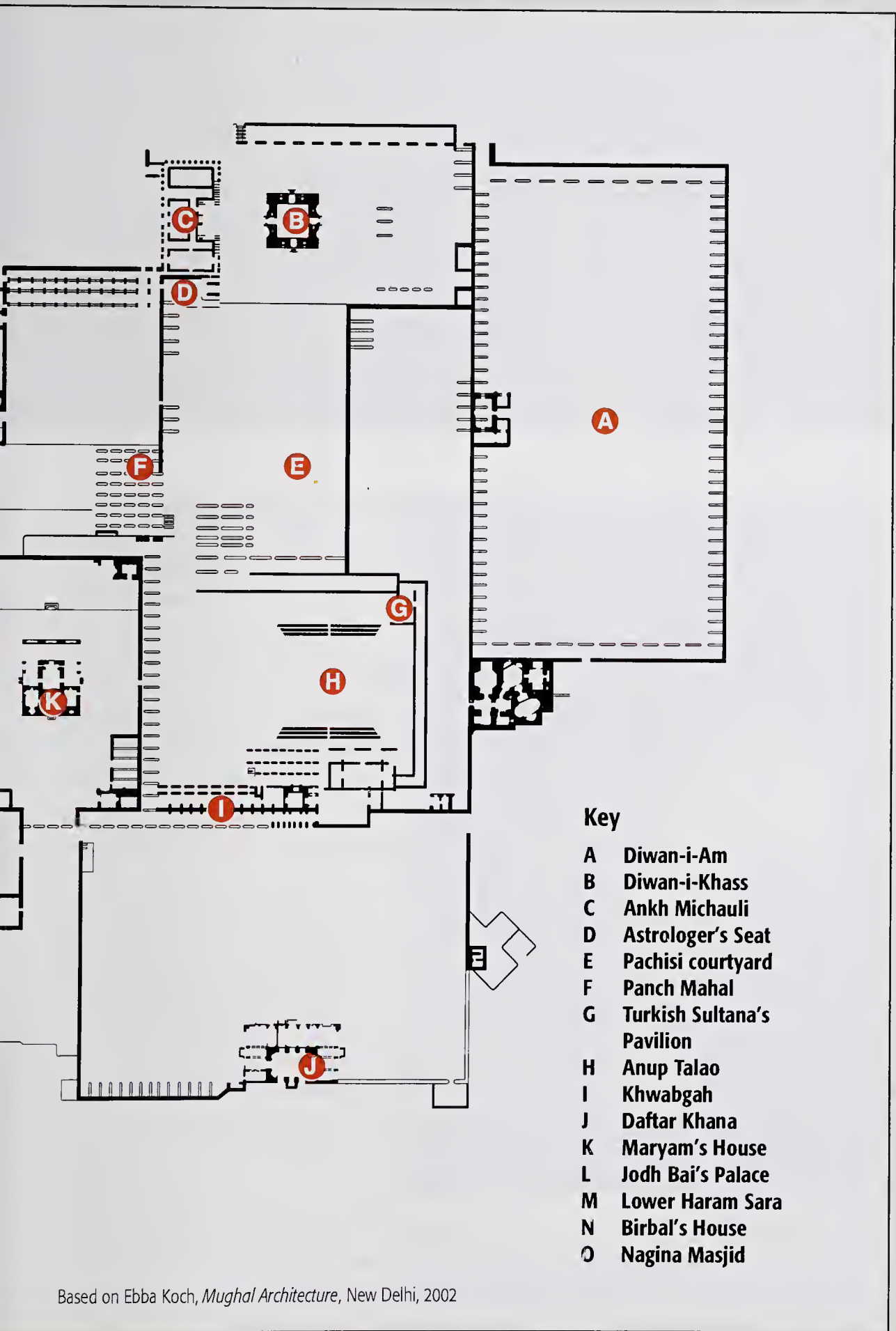
The Imperial Palace complex consists of a number of independent pavilions arranged in formal geometry on a piece of level ground,

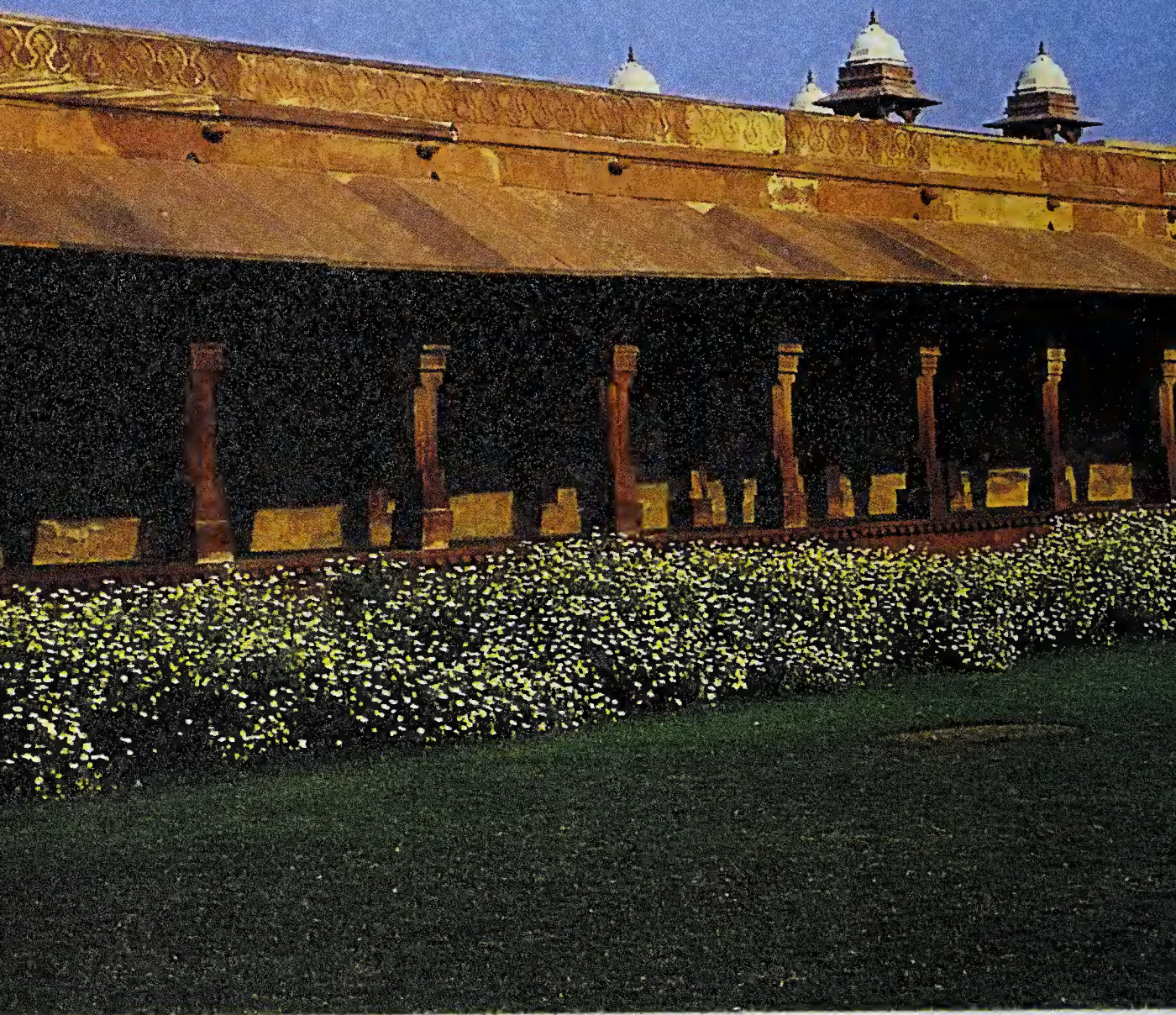
Imperial Palace Complex



MAP NOT TO SCALE

a pattern derived from Arab and Central Asian tent encampments. In its entirety, the monuments of Fatehpur Sikri thus reflect the genius of Akbar in assimilating diverse regional architectural influences within a holistic style that was uniquely his own.





Diwan-i-Am

The colonnaded courtyard of the Diwan-i-Am or the public enclosure runs 112 metres from north to south and 55 metres from east to west. The colonnade of 111 bays runs around the court, broken at the west by the emperor's pavilion, from where Akbar would dispense justice to one and all.

The pavilion is a projecting structure with a pitched stone roof and five equal openings to the front. The emperor sat in the central bay upon cushions and carpets

and on either side were stone screens carved in fine geometrical patterns.

The Akbari style of architecture, heavily influenced by regional patterns, is clearly visible here. The geometric patterns on the *jalis* are the only conspicuously Islamic feature. However, like other apartments in the palace, the construction is trabeate and includes components such as corbelled capitals and *chhajjas* derived from indigenous temple architecture. From here the emperor had a direct passage into the Daulat Khana or private

Above:
**Colonnade
of the
Diwan-i-Am**



royal apartments, as does the modern traveller.

To the right of the path that leads into the Diwan-i-Am courtyard is a great stone ring embedded into the earth. Local guides will tell you that this was where an elephant used to be tethered for the sole task of crushing the condemned to death in full view of the emperor and his court. A more plausible reason is that the ring was probably meant for exhibiting captured elephants brought to the palace as trophies of war.



Above:
The pavilion in Diwan-i-Am where Akbar gave public audience

Daulat Khana

Daulat Khana, literally the Abode of Fortune, comprises the pillared structure known as Diwan-i- Khass, the two-roomed Diwan Khana-i-Khass, the Khwabgah, the Anup Talao, the Turkish Sultana's Pavilion and some other minor structures.

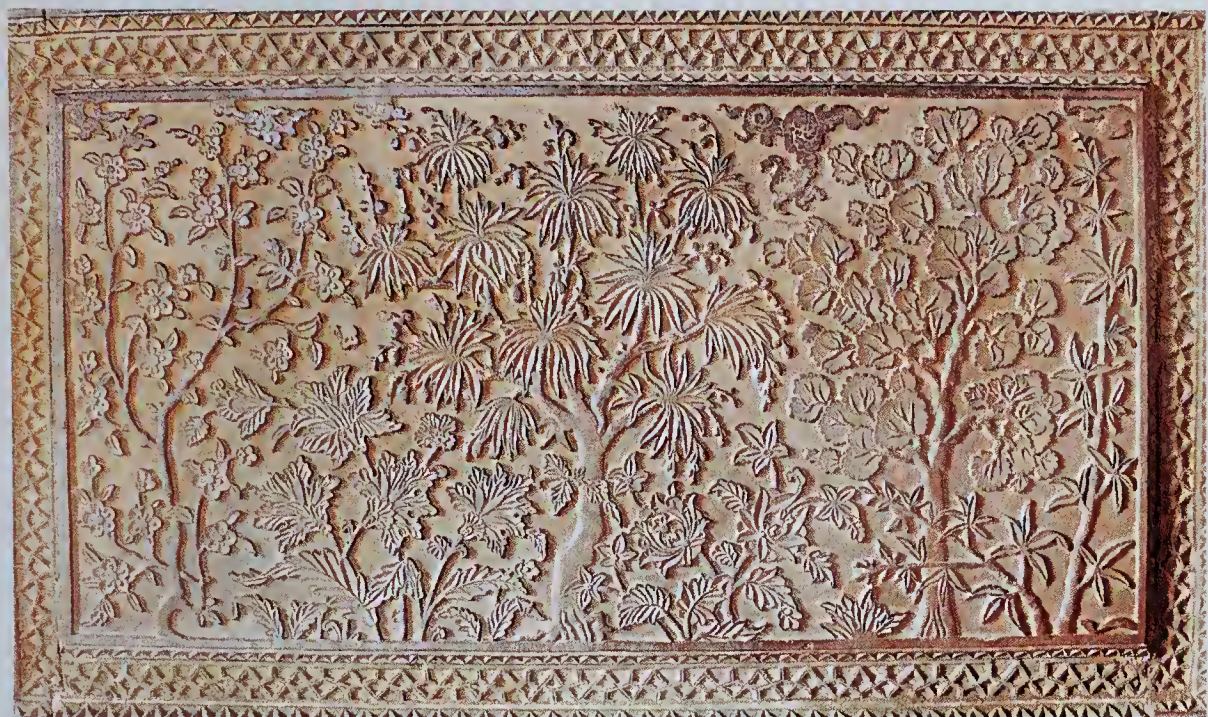
Below:

Imperial buildings in the Daulat Khana complex

Right:

Detail from the Turkish Sultana's Pavilion or Hujra-i-Anup Talao







Diwan-i-Khass (Jewel House)

This is one of the most fantastically conceived yet enigmatic buildings in Fatehpur Sikri and continues to be its most widely photographed monument. It has been variously identified as the Diwan-i-Khass, the Jewel House and even the elusive Ibadat Khana. Its interior is dominated by a massive, richly carved pillar which supports one of the most elaborate capitals ever conceived: a circular arrangement of brackets that supports a circular platform, linked by four diagonal 'bridges' connecting the hanging galleries to each corner of the building.

According to Rizvi, '...It was possibly a storehouse for the imperial hoard of gems and jewels.... And it is probably quite true that the emperor often sat suspended in air as it were, upon the great capital... to inspect his jewels.' According to other historians it was the Diwan-i-Khass or hall of private audience. Y D Sharma conjectures that the central place on the top of the pillar was occupied by the emperor's throne while his ministers sat at the corners or on the peripheral passage.

G H R Tillotson, on the other hand, recalls the pattern of *mandalas*, in which the column stands for the axis of the world in Hindu

Above:
Diwan-i-Khass,
one of the
most famous
structures in
Fatehpur Sikri

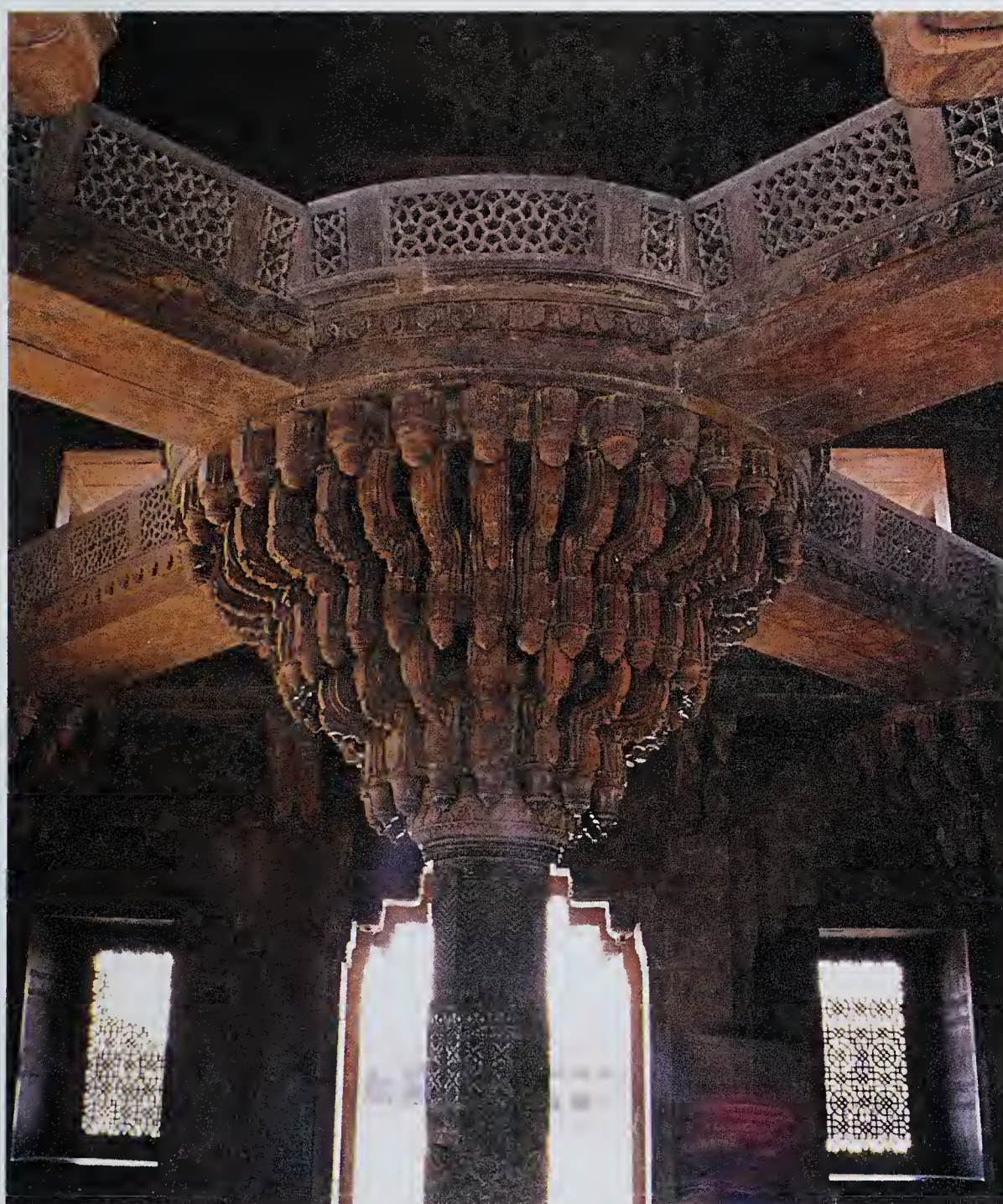
cosmology and hence anyone who sits on it would adopt the position of supreme power. He also claims that its role may have been ceremonial and ritualistic rather than practical.

Percy Brown says that the emperor sat enthroned on the central platform while listening to arguments from different religions, the whole arrangement signifying what he has termed as 'Akbar's dominion over the Four Quarters'.

A problem faced while identifying many monuments in Fatehpur is that they were constructed in such a way that a variety of uses could be assigned to them. With the passage of time it became even harder, since many legends, not necessarily historically accurate, became attached to them, making it even more difficult to distinguish fact from fiction.

Below:

The richly carved pillar in Diwan-i-Khass





Left:
**Exquisite
stone brackets
of the
Astrologer's
Seat**

There is little possibility that the building popularly called **Ankh Michauli**, literally blind man's buff, was actually the place where Akbar played this game with the women of his harem. Akbar's days and nights passed in constant hard work, and he must have had little time for such frivolities. Rizvi claims that this building was actually part of the **Imperial Treasury**, hence explaining its location at the northern end of the Daulat Khana quadrangle. Tillotson and other historians, however, differ, suggesting that it was perfectly adaptable as a palace pavilion in which a range of social and

domestic activities might have been performed.

In the south-west corner of the Treasury stands a kiosk traditionally called the **Astrologer's Seat**. The luxuriously extravagant stone brackets placed on each of the kiosk's four openings make it a photographer's delight. Rizvi suggests that the emperor would sit here and watch the distribution of the copper coins which contemporary European travellers say were usually heaped in the courtyard to pay subordinate officers or else the needy poor.

Diwan Khana-i-Khass and Khwabgah

Diwan Khana-i-Khass, a two-chambered pavilion to the far left of the imperial complex, is where the emperor met with his closest advisers. The eastern room was once richly painted and the faintest outlines of floral designs still remain. The lower walls of the rooms were hollow, with sliding stone slabs closing the openings – historians conjecture that the spaces were used for storing books that Akbar was fond of having read out to him.

A large room behind this chamber, 12 metres by 8 metres, contained a platform against the southern wall, with a

window above it. Father Monserrate records that carpets and cushions were laid upon the platform, reminding him of ‘a couch covered with scarlet rugs’. The emperor used to reach this platform by means of wooden or marble steps, which could be slid beneath the platform.

To the east of the room is a small bathroom, with water that flowed through conduit pipes fitted in channels under the floor. In the west wall there was a doorway leading to the courtyard in front of the Records Office, which was used by clerks of the **Record Office** as well as the translators of the Maktab Khana, while they waited upon the emperor.

Below:
Platform in the Diwan Khana-i-Khass on which Akbar is believed to have sat, discussing various issues with close advisors



The window on the southern wall of the larger chamber, looking on to the courtyard quadrangle, was the opening from where the emperor showed himself to his subjects every day. Some of his subjects would eat nothing until they had seen his face. The practice, popularised by Akbar, was known as *jharokha-darshan*.

The beautiful chamber on the first floor of the Diwan Khana-i-Khass was the emperor's private room, popularly known as **Khwabgah** or sleeping chamber.

The ladies of the Haram Sara could easily reach the emperor here whenever he so wished. After sitting cross-legged in the Diwan Khana-i-Khass for several hours Akbar probably used to retire here for relaxation.

Badauni relates the story of Devi, a Brahmin interpreter of the *Mahabharata*, who used to be pulled up while sitting on a *charpai* (Indian string bed) till he was level with the emperor's Khwabgah. Whilst thus suspended in mid-air, he instructed the emperor on the



myths and legends of Hinduism. It was here too that the emperor would allow his favourites to read out passages from books to him; or he would chat with his courtiers Abul Fazl and Raja Birbal. Philosophers, Sufi saints, and others were also presented to the emperor here, and in this room they all sat together and talked informally on diverse subjects.

Below:

Anup Talao or Peerless Pool lies to the north-east of the Diwan Khana-i-Khass

Anup Talao

Anup Talao or the Peerless Pool – incidentally referred to as Kapur Talao by Monserrate and Jahangir – is a 29 metres square tank, now dry most of the year, north-east of the Diwan Khana-i-Khass. Steps led down to the water, which was supplied from the northern waterworks. It is now less than one-and-a-half metre deep, having been given a new floor in the 1840s. Anup Talao has a central island linked by four bridges to its sides.





Turkish Sultana's Pavilion (Hujra-i-Anup Talao)

North-east of Anup Talao is a small and beautiful structure which has been described as a 'superb jewel casket'. In fact, the carvings on its bracket friezes, pillars and pilasters are so intricate that they appear to be the work of wood-carvers rather than that of stonemasons.

Commonly known as Turkish Sultana's Pavilion, it is unlikely that the building was a *zanana* residence, since it is located so close to the *mardana* section of the imperial palace. It was probably a pavilion for repose, attached to the pool. Badauni says that one night in 1575, a very important religious

discussion took place in the Hujra-i-Anup Talao (Chamber of the Anup Talao).

The **Abdar Khana** or the Water and Fruit Store has been wrongly called **Girls' School**. This two-storied structure was probably where Akbar's drinking water was kept in the care of a trusted nobleman. The imperial store for fruits such as melons, mangoes, and grapes was also probably here, and the 'forty courses' that usually comprised the emperor's meal were tasted and served from this building.

Below:

The superbly carved Turkish Sultana's Pavilion adjoining Anup Talao

Left:

Detail from the Turkish Sultana's Pavilion





Left:
Pachisi, the courtyard paved to resemble a board game

The large courtyard of red sandstone that lies between the Anup Talao and Diwan-i-Khass is known as the **Pachisi**. It is so named because some of the paving stones are laid out to resemble the cruciform board on which the popular Indian board game of *pachisi* is played. Local legend claims that the emperor played the game using slave girls as living pieces.

Outside the Daulat Khana complex and

beyond the tarred road leading to the Jami Masjid is the **Daftar Khana** or Record Office. The grouping of double columns with their fine brackets, one on the outer and one on the inner aspect produces a suggestion of arches. The Daftar Khana's enclosure sheltered another of Akbar's projects, his translation bureau, or **Maktab Khana**, represented today by the remains of cloisters to the west of the Daftar Khana building.

Below:
Daftar Khana or the imperial Records Office



Ibadat Khana

If only it could be positively identified, the richest building at Fatehpur in historical and literary significance would have been the Ibadat Khana or 'house of worship' where Akbar led discussions with divines of various religions. It is certain that it is not among the buildings still standing. While its site has been identified with tolerable certainty, it is scarcely worth the inspection of the visitor interested only in the splendid and the picturesque.

Archaeologist Rizvi says that the Ibadat Khana was behind the principal Haram Sara Palace. Today it is a tumbled mass of rubble scattered with gravestones and scrubby trees, located between the ticket gate adjacent to Jodh Bai's Palace and the Badshahi Darwaza of the *dargah* complex.

All that a visitor can see today is a massive rubble platform, 19.5 metres square, covered with about 18 cm of lime mortar, visible at the edges. On looking more closely, one perceives the outline of a second platform quite clearly. Heaped upon this is more debris, which might have represented a third platform.





Din-i-Ilahi

One of the most contentious aspects of Akbar's reign was the religious policy pursued by him. As a man drawn to mysticism and fond of deep contemplation, Akbar's quest for formulating a new religion has to be viewed as a blend of personal inclination and state policy.

Akbar carefully examined the doctrines of the various sects of Islam apart from studying Hinduism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity and meditated on various aspects of their teachings, customs and ceremonies. This study pursued with devotion for more than seven years revealed that every religion had elements of truth but differences in opinion regarding interpretation of various socio-economic and political issues resulted in hostilities.

Therefore it became important to formulate a 'consensual religion' whose *de facto* authority lay with the emperor, who in his divine wisdom, would guide the masses both as a temporal and spiritual head.

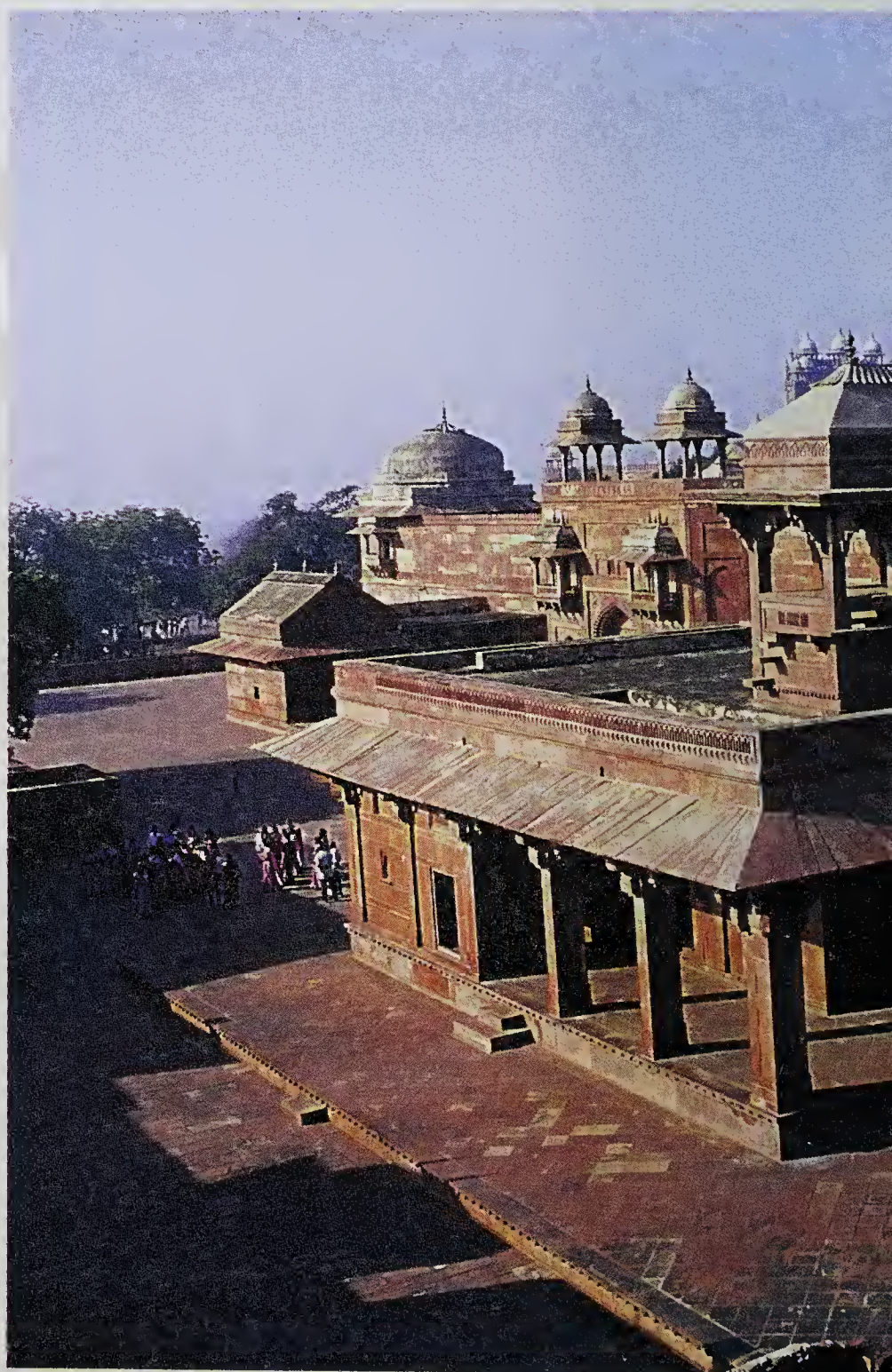
The problem was how to make people accept it. The emperor did not want it to be an imposition. In March

1582, he convened a general conference of the prominent divines of various religions, nobles, officers and the *ulema* to discuss the desirability of a 'national' religion. He announced, 'For an empire ruled by one head it was a bad thing to have the members divided among themselves'. His progression away from orthodox Islam towards his self-created religion has often been seen by historians as part of a conscious effort to represent all his people.

The official account of the Divine Faith is given by Abul Fazl in *Ain-i-Akbari*, who says that people seeking guidance to truth, will naturally look to their king. Din-i-Ilahi was officially called the *Tauhid-i-Ilahi* or Divine Monotheism and had no temple or mosque, no scriptures or religious books. Members were supposed to look on Akbar as the pivot or the perfect man or *Insan-i-Kamil*. Din-i-Ilahi remained from its inception a socio-religious-cum-political brotherhood.

Imperial Harem

**A view of the Imperial Harem complex,
with Maryam's House in the foreground**



The imperial Harem or Haram Sara was an enclosure where women of the royal household lived in protected environs. It included the Panch Mahal, Jodh Bai's Palace, and what are known as Maryam's House and Birbal's House. Each was connected with the other by covered passages, and screened off to the east from the Daulat Khana or the imperial court and treasuries.



The harem was also an important institution of the state. The senior queen in the emperor's family was not only the mistress of the royal household, but also the guardian of two of the seals of the realm and a *farman* or royal order without the seal was ineffective.

Akbar's mother, Hamida Banu Begum (1527-1604) was the principal lady of his court. She was given the title of Maryam Makani, literally 'of rank equal to Mary', and the emperor sought solace from her in his difficulties and advice on contentious issues.

Akbar married several times, often due to political exigencies and it is believed that apart from Muslim and Hindu wives he also had a Christian wife. He was also the first Muslim ruler in India to permit his wives to continue following their faith within the precincts of the harem.

The emperor extended to the wives of nobles and 'women of chaste character' a singular privilege – to dwell in the Haram Sara for as long as a month at a time, with the purpose of bestowing distinction upon the family of the women so invited. Abul Fazl's contention that there were some 5,000

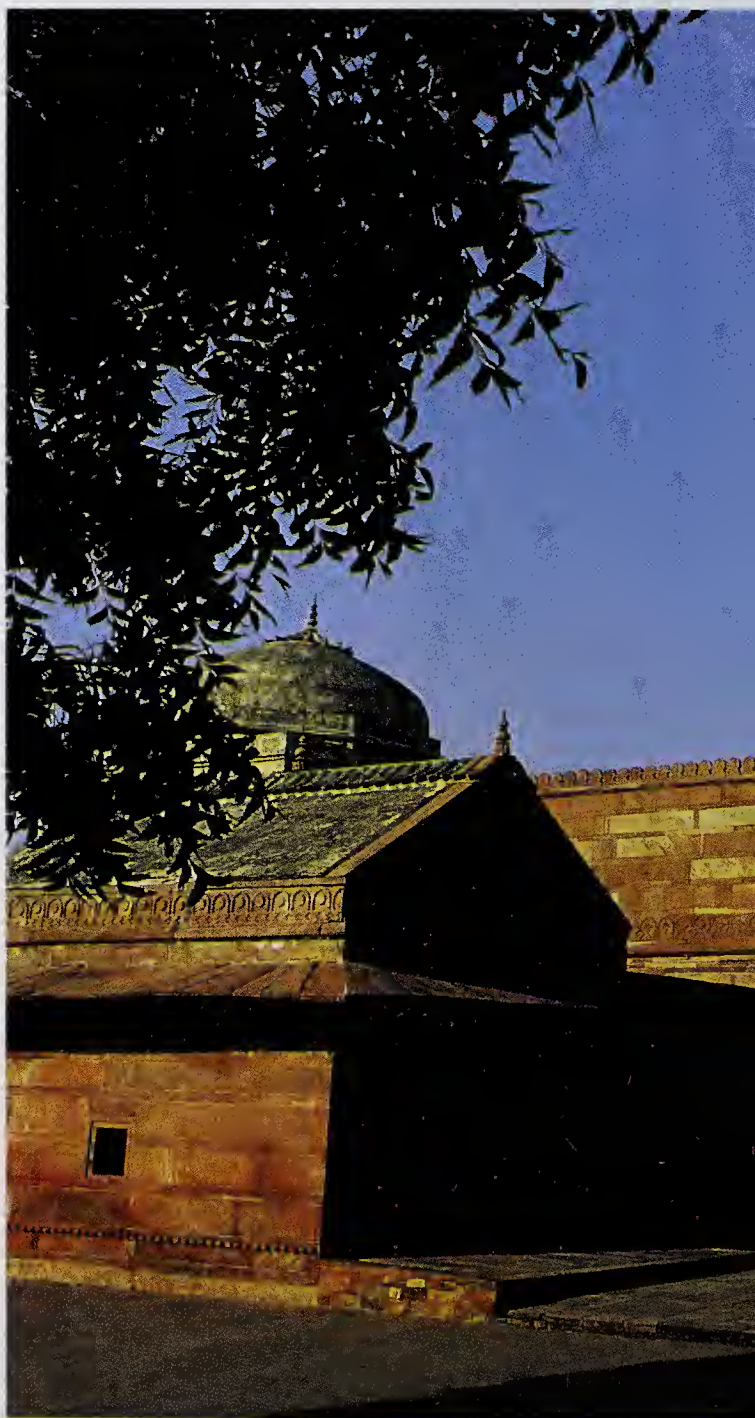
women in the Haram Sara, seems to be an exaggeration.

Monserate, the Jesuit priest, says that 'Akbar has more than 300 wives, dwelling in separate suites of rooms'.

Jodh Bai's Palace or Principal Haram Sara

This was the residence of a number of the emperor's principal wives, and not Jodh Bai's personal palace as often claimed. *Zenana* life was largely communal and this

Below:
**The facade
of Jodh Bai's
Palace**

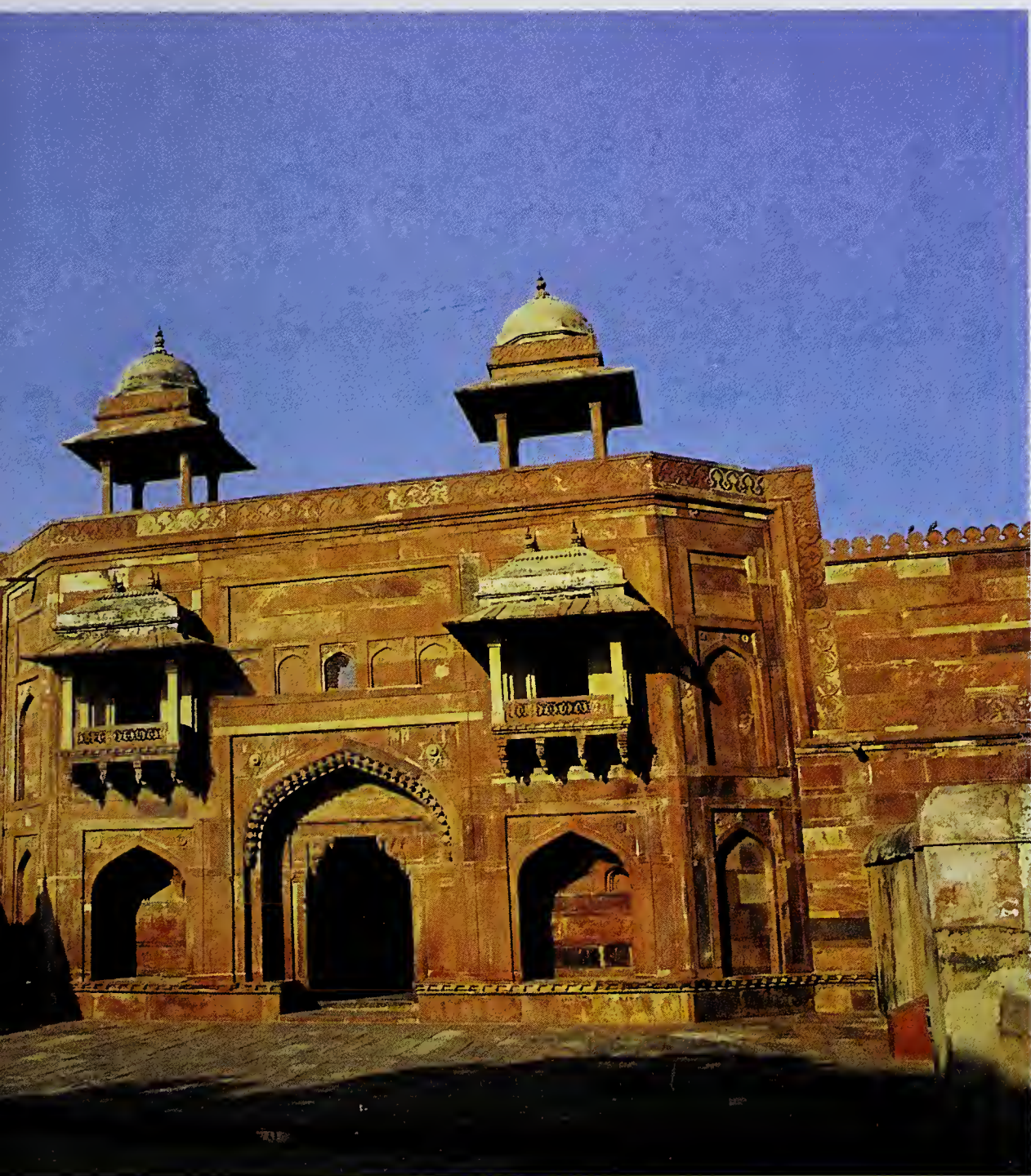


complex, also known as Shabistan-i-Iqbal, was designed to provide space, both private and shared, to women living there.

It is the largest and most important of the buildings in the Haram Sara having a single entrance, facing east across a wide paved courtyard. From the entrance of the palace a screened viaduct ran across the road behind Maryam's House; and joined the top of the cloister facing the Daftar Khana. Through it, Akbar had easy and

private access from his Khwabgah to every palace in the Haram Sara.

The palace appears solemn and massive; the balconies at the corners allowed the residents a view of the outside but kept the interiors well concealed. The principal entrance, once guarded by eunuchs, is double-storied. Jodh Bai's Palace is a good place to study the different architectural styles in the buildings of Fatehpur Sikri.





Left:
The ribbed
ceiling of
the upper
floor in
Jodh Bai's
Palace

Right:
The viaduct
from Hawa
Mahal to
Hathi Pol
contains the
only surviving
arabesque
screen in
Fatehpur Sikri

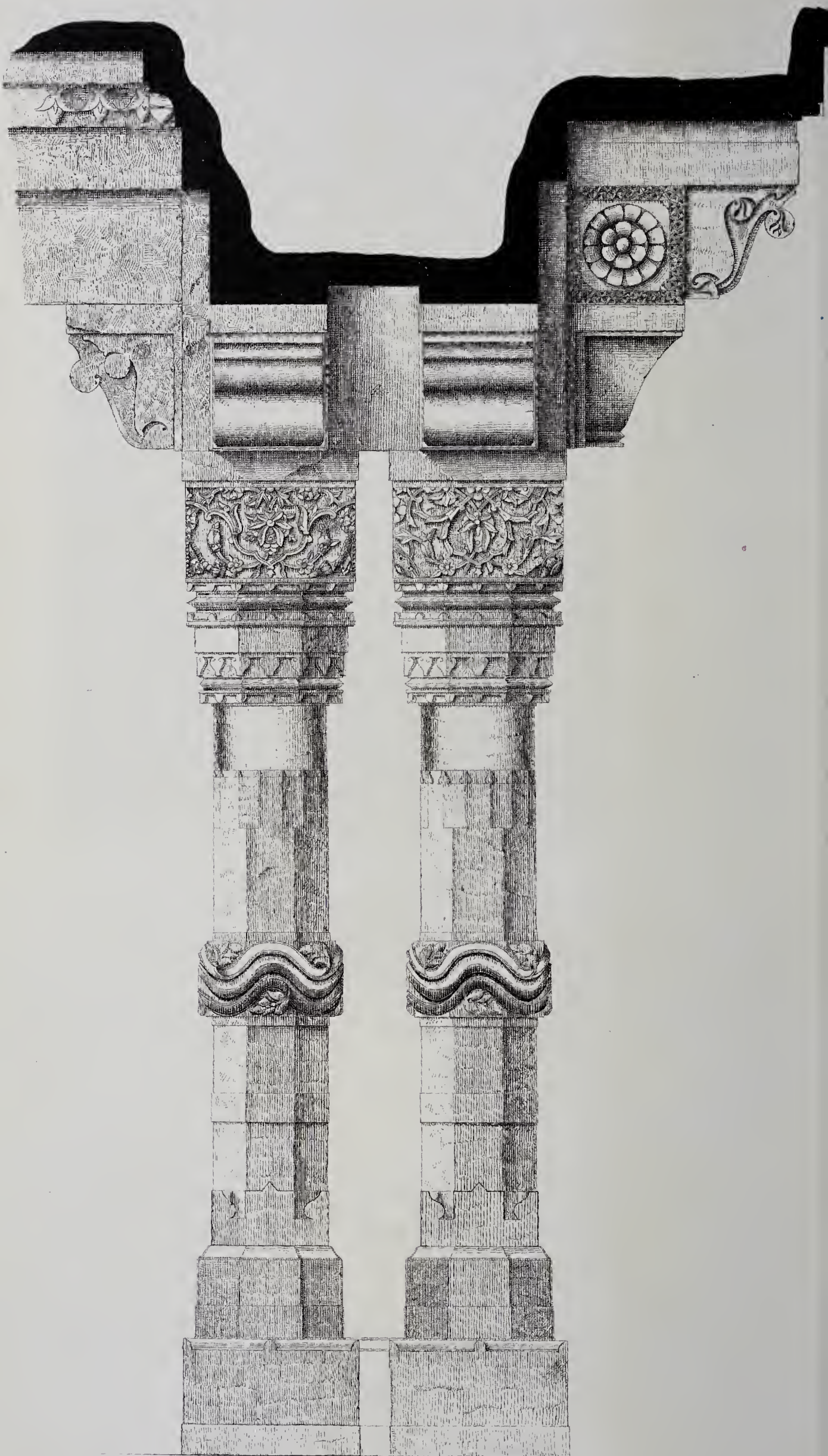


The bases, columns, and capitals in the central rooms are carved in the Hindu manner and the plan draws inspiration from Rajput traditions as against the more Islamic pattern of other buildings. The azure-blue ribbed roof of the upper rooms at the northern and southern ends stand out among the sea of dull and weathered kiosks.

Against the northern exterior wall of Jodh Bai's Palace is the **Hawa Mahal** or Wind Palace. The first storey, supported on square columns in double

rows, is open; the second is closed with beautiful stone screens. From the eastern and western sides of the central northern room, staircases rise to the screened first storey. Here the emperor was wont to recline in fresh air with a few chosen ladies, secluded from public eye.

One can walk across from the Hawa Mahal to the Hathi Pol through a screened viaduct which has the only surviving arabesque stone screen in Fatehpur.



COL. 20.

COL. 21.

Edw. W. Smith
A.P.C.

Panch Mahal (Badgir)

Panch Mahal is an extraordinary structure, entirely columnar, consisting of four storeys of decreasing size, disposed asymmetrically upon a ground floor that contains 84 columns, a number regarded as highly auspicious by Hindus. The first storey contains 56 columns; the second, 20; the third, 12; and the top storey is a single, domed kiosk supported on four pillars, taking the total to 176. Spend some time on the first floor where no two columns are alike. Some are circular with tiny blossoms carved on them; others octagonal with *fleur-de-lis* patterns; some have weaves around their centres; and one carries a beautiful version of the bell-and-chain motif.

Panch Mahal is modelled on the Persian *badgir* or 'wind-catcher' and meant to mitigate the intense summer heat. Yet it was unlike the Persian original in that it was not a tower but built in diminishing stages. Also it had five storeys, not the usual three, and was screened on all but the ground floor. The Indian tower was probably open towards the private garden on the west, and screened in the hot weather with *khas tattis*,



'India's climate is gentle to stone if not people and a modern visitor could well be persuaded that these intricate casket-like buildings, with their elaborately carved stone ornamentation still crisp and unweathered, had been completed only yesterday'.

– Bamber Gascoigne
The Great Moghuls

still in use all over northern India, which cool the air through the evaporation of the water splashed regularly over them.

Left:
**Original
drawing of a
column from
Panch Mahal**

Maryam's House or Sunahra Makan

To the south-east of Panch Mahal stands a severe looking building known as Sunahra Makan, so called because of the beautiful murals and gold coloured paintings that once adorned it. It is now generally referred to as Maryam's House. A pavilion on top softens the otherwise grim look of the building. Stone eaves (restored in 1925-26) run around the building and are supported on heavy brackets. Some of these are carved: one shows Rama attended by Hanuman, another a pair of fat geese, clearly inspired by Hindu imagery.

Rizvi believes that the popular ascription of this house to a Portuguese queen of Akbar called Marie is totally imaginary. There were two Maryams in Akbar's court: Maryam Makani ('equal in rank to Mary') was Akbar's mother, Hamida Banu Begum, and Maryam Zamani ('Mary of the Age') was his first Rajput queen and mother of his first-born son, Emperor Jahangir. Since it is fairly certain that Maryam Zamani lived in the main palace of the Haram Sara, it may be safely presumed that Akbar's mother, Maryam Makani lived here. While travelling with the emperor her importance was acknowledged by assigning her a central place in the camp.

Below:
Maryam's House, popularly known as Sunahra Makan





North-west of Sunahra Makan is a small, secluded garden laid out on the *charbagh* principle. In the middle of this charming garden is a small fishpond. The water of this pond once ran out towards the south over a sloping stone slab carved with a pattern called *mahipusht*, representing the scales of a fish.

Going back towards the Hawa Mahal one enters the screened arches of the **Nagina Masjid**. All Mughal palaces have a small private mosque set aside for the ladies of the imperial harem called by this name. The one at Fatehpur Sikri is rather plain and its decoration somewhat old-fashioned.

The building on the western wall of the

Treasury building, and within the Haram Sara enclosure was likely to have been a guesthouse for the high-born women Akbar admitted into his harem for short stays. Arranged in the form of a small caravanserai, it was ideally suited for the regular reception of guests.

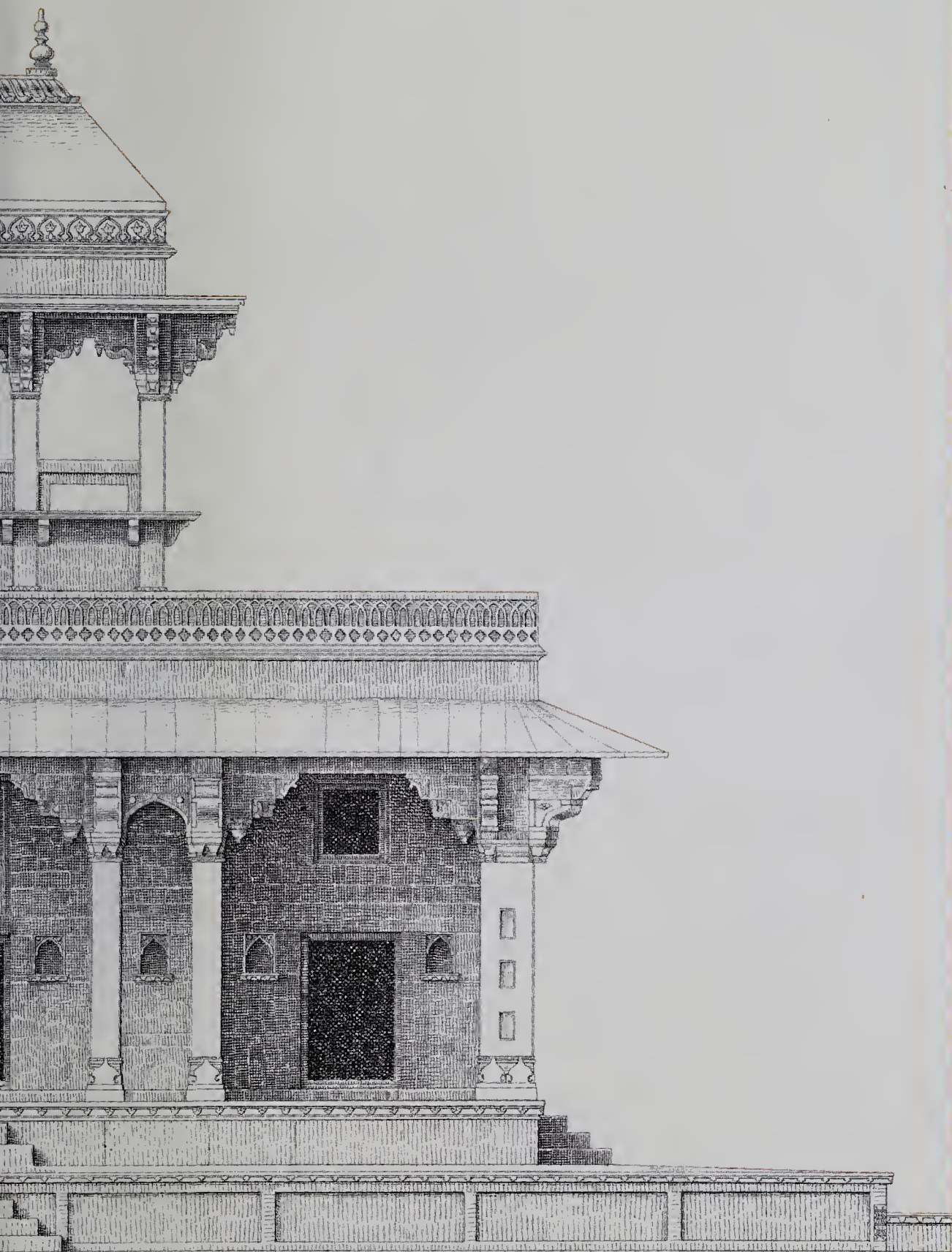
To the left of Sunahra Makan stands a plain-looking red structure popularly called **Jodh Bai's Kitchen**. The interior is finely carved but ruined by smoke from fires. Outside, however, the greater part of the carving is excellently preserved. The finest part is the frieze of tassels simulating a pelmet or valance. Rizvi calls this building the **Haram Sara Offices**.

Above:
The road from Hathi Pol with the rear-view of Nagina Masjid to the right

Next Page:
Original drawing of the north elevation of Maryam's House



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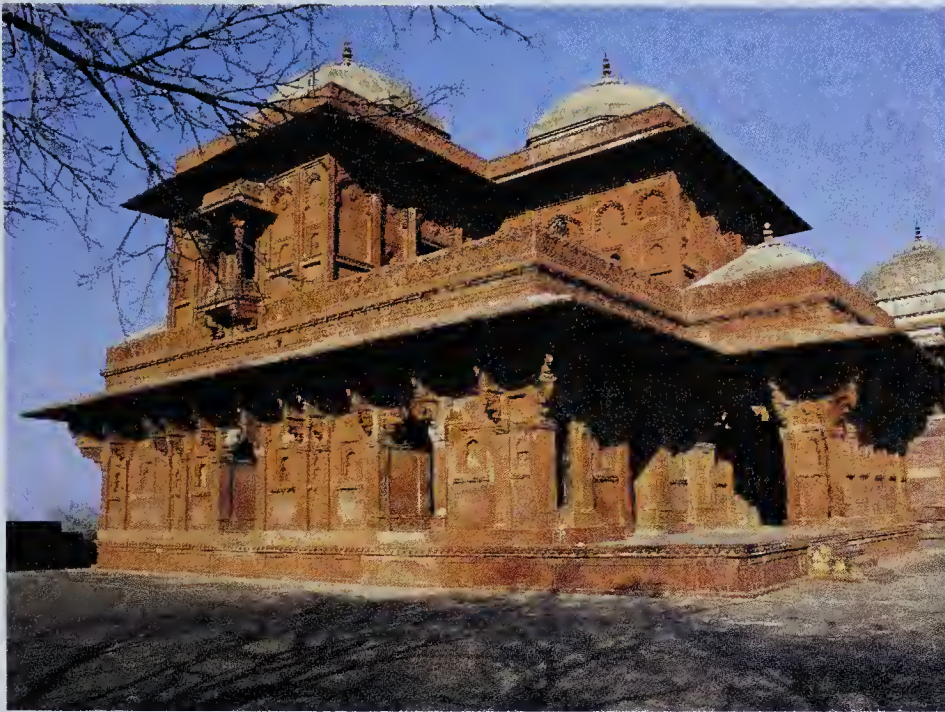


Edmund W. Smith

25 30 35 40 45 Feet

50





Left:
The building
commonly
called
Birbal's
House

Below:
A detail from
the interior
of Birbal's
House

Birbal's House or Northern Palace of the Haram Sara

Though Birbal was a colourful and influential figure in Akbar's court, scarcely could he have occupied a house in the middle of the *zanana*. This building was definitely an integral part of the Haram Sara, its most probable occupants being Akbar's two senior queens, Ruqayya Begum and Salima Sultan Begum.

The building represents, at least stylistically, a conjoining of the two main architectural traditions in India – the Hindu and the Islamic, but there has been no attempt to fuse or synthesise these traditions. They are simply placed together in an elaborate medley.

The pilasters and brackets, and parts of the *chhajja* especially deserve notice. Each pilaster is finely carved with a pleasant geometrical pattern while the bases are typically Hindu, being cut with a deep semi-circle with a fan-like halo around it.



Left:
Details of brackets showing
traditional Hindu influence
in Birbal's House



Lower Haram Sara buildings

At the rear of the principal Haram Sara, is a large colonnaded enclosure. It has been variously called the imperial stables for camels, elephants or the emperor's choicest horses.

However, it is doubtful that a structure which required for a crowd of men passing in and out could have been placed so close to the Haram Sara. The place must instead have been allotted to the serving maids of the ladies' palaces. The sanitary needs of the staff were met with a *hammam* (bath) at the eastern end of the block.

A massive, plastered building with slightly battered walls to the east of Birbal's House is supposed to have been

the *Kabutar Khana* or Pigeon House.

On the other side of the incline is a building generally referred to as the *Filkhana* or Elephant House. But these were more probably lodgings for guards, either eunuchs or women.

Hathi Pol and Sangin Burj

Hathi Pol gets its name from the two headless elephants that flank the gateway. The majestic elephants stand headless today because of the holy zeal of Aurangzeb who decapitated them. They were not sculpted but built of rubble faced with stone slabs, which were then cut to form.

Sangin Burj was also located here. It was the principal Naqqar Khana of Fatehpur.

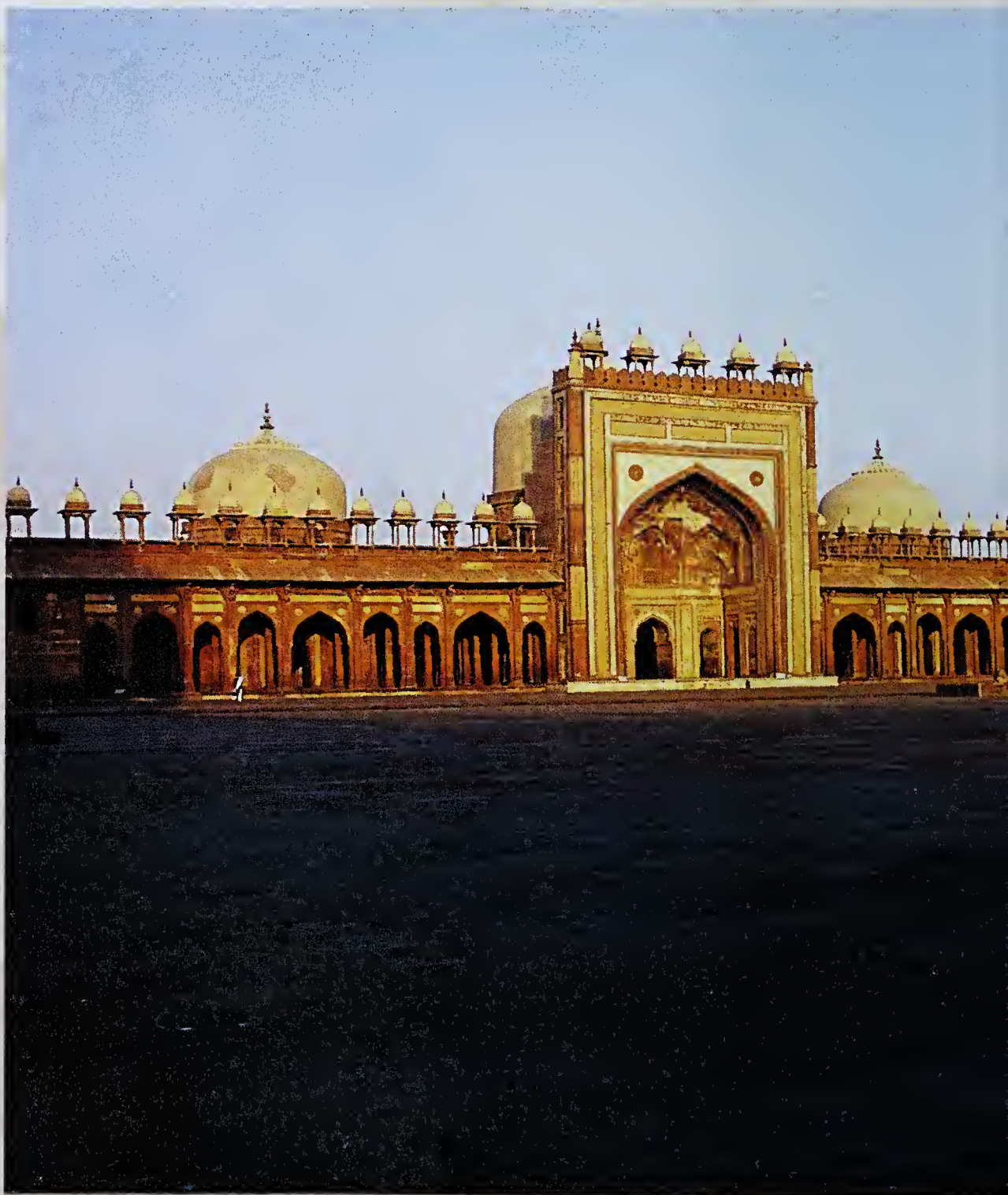
Left:
The pavilion where maids who served the Haram Sara are supposed to have lived

Below:
Inside view of Hathi Pol and Sangin Burj or the principal Naqqar Khana of Fatehpur



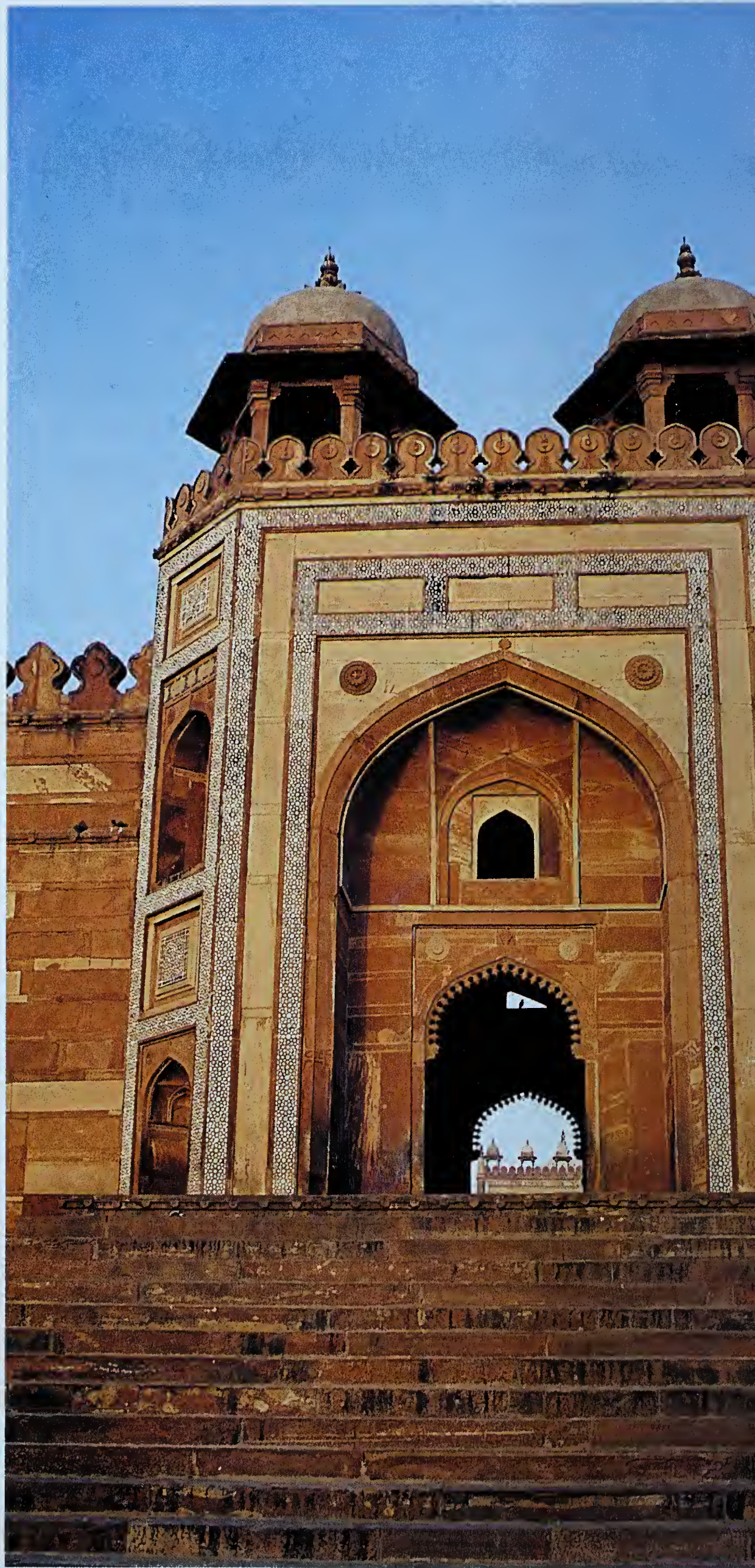
Jamī Masjid and Chishtī Monuments


The vast expanse of the courtyard in the Jamī Masjid complex
with Salim Chishtī's *dargah* on the right



Amongst the earliest monuments to have been constructed in Fatehpur Sikri, the buildings of the *dargah* complex followed an architectural style that gave expression to the religious ideology Akbar relied upon in the early years of his reign. The monuments reflect not only Emperor Akbar's profound reverence for Shaikh Salim Chishti, but are his strongest assertion of imperial power and dominance.







By placing Shaikh Salim's tomb in the courtyard of the great mosque, Akbar juxtaposed the popular appeal of mystical Islam with an unambiguous affirmation of the orthodox Muslim foundations of his regime. The great congregational mosque is undoubtedly the most dominant building in Fatehpur Sikri.

Badshahi Darwaza

Badshahi Darwaza projects from the wall of the mosque in the form of a half-hexagonal porch and is 13.2 metres wide and 18.6 metres high. Its two sides have arched openings and a similar archway tops the entrance. Today it is the entrance to the *dargah* complex closest to the tourist parking lot. The actual gateway within is reduced to human proportions by an ingenious device perfected in Iran in previous centuries and also used in the Buland Darwaza.

As one enters the great expanse of the courtyard (109.6 metre by 133.5 metres) of the Jami Masjid, one is overwhelmed by its great dignity and

spaciousness. Around the edges of the courtyard are cells once used for the accommodation of the *mullahs*. Entering from the Badshahi Darwaza, the visitor sees before him the majestic arch of the central prayer-chamber of the mosque. To the left is visible the rear facade of the Buland Darwaza adorned with small domed kiosks.

Jahangir remarks in *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* that on the eve of holy days and important imperial anniversaries, these kiosks were enveloped in coloured cloth, and lamps lit within. The jewel-like marble tomb of the Shaikh is to the right. Further right of the *dargah* is a red sandstone structure popularly referred to as the Tomb of Islam Khan, and behind these monuments is the small and pretty northern gateway of the Jami Masjid complex.

On the south-east corner of the courtyard is a small well where once stood the great rainwater cistern or *birka* and in the centre of the courtyard stands a masonry tank of red sandstone.

Left:

Badshahi Darwaza or the King's Doorway was used by Akbar to join the congregational prayers in the Jami Masjid

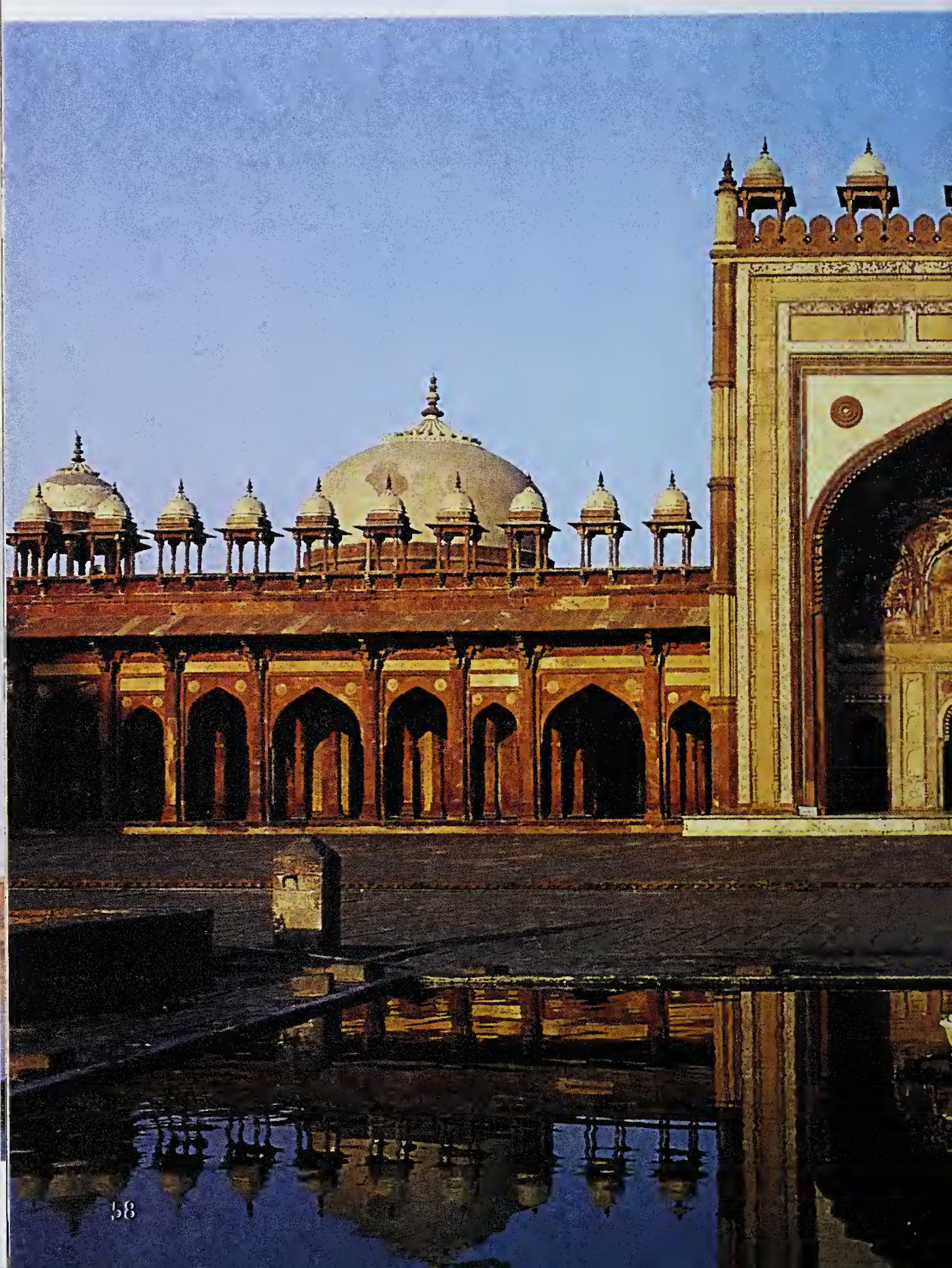
Jami Masjid

Dominating the scene, and occupying the highest point on the ridge, the Jami Masjid is the principal building of Fatehpur and the vastest, spanning 133.6 metres north to south and 165.2 metres east to west. According to inscriptions on either side of the central archway of the prayer chamber, the construction of the

mosque was completed in 1571-72. And given Badauni's evidence that the building work took five years, we have an idea of the date of commissioning of the great mosque.

Akbar acknowledged his deep gratitude and respect for Shaikh Salim Chishti by ascribing the mosque to him. The Shaikh died on 14 February 1572 aged 95 lunar years (92 solar

Below:
The Jami Masjid was conceived on a scale larger than any existing mosque in India

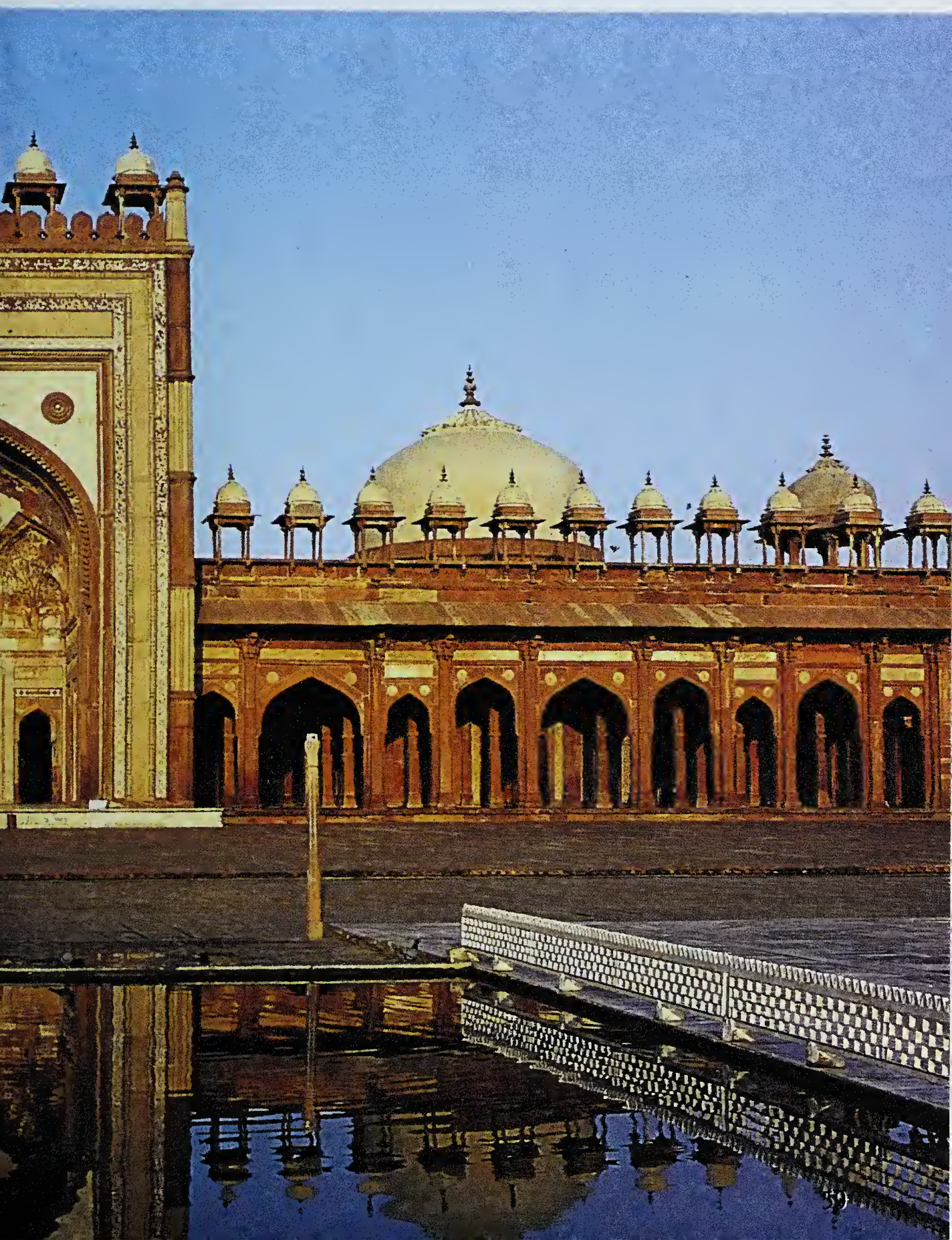


years) and the great mosque must have been nearly complete before his death.

Legend has it that the emperor himself often swept the floor of the mosque and called the *azan*. In 1579, he read the *khutba*, the prayer to proclaim his sovereignty, and also issued the *mahzar* or declaration from the hallowed precincts of Jami Masjid that

assigned to him unlimited powers in religious matters.

Although conceived on a scale larger than any previous mosque in India, the Jami Masjid follows the conventional structure of a mosque – it comprises an open courtyard with pillared cloisters on three sides and the western end occupied by the sanctuary.



The prayer hall has an arcade of pointed arches, interrupted and dwarfed by a towering central *iwan* which tends to obscure the central dome, while the lateral domes lurk behind a fringe of *chhatris*.

There are three *mihhrabs* (marking the *qibla* or the direction of the holy city of Mecca), in each of the seven bays. The central *mihhrab* of Jami Masjid, pentagonal in shape and covered by a semi-dome, is a splendid specimen of traditional decorative art.



Above and Right:
**Pillared bays in
Jami Masjid**





To the right is the *mimbar*, a simple marble structure of three steps, from where was read the Friday oration or the *khutba*. Special orations were also read on the occasion of *Id-ul-Qurban* and *Id-ul-Fitr*, the two great festivals of the Muslim calendar.

From either side of the central chamber, one can pass into the north and south aisles through three arched openings. The wings are divided into three halls, each provided with a central *mihrab* flanked by two smaller ones, embellished with Quranic verses.

The flat roofs of the side halls are supported on corbels rather than squinches.

Akbar seems to have absorbed this architectural style from Gujarat after his conquest of that region. This deliberate use of Hindu structural forms in a mosque had not been paralleled in northern India for 300 years, since the early days of the Muslim advent produced structures such as the Quwwat-ul-Islam Masjid next to Qutb Minar in Delhi or the Adhai Din ka Jhompra in Ajmer.

Above:
Detail of the painted interiors of Jami Masjid

Right:
The pillars around the *dargah* are quite unique. Serpentine brackets spring from the shafts and the spaces between the curves are filled with *jalis*.



Shaikh Salim Chishti's Tomb

The tomb of Shaikh Salim Chishti is often described in superlatives. Percy Brown has called the tomb, 'an architectural cameo, its chaste marble forms being aerial in their delicacy, so that it appears as a chiselled, polished and fretted exquisiteness'.

In the last years of his life, Shaikh Salim Chishti abandoned his cell besides the Stone Cutters' Mosque for a new *khanqah* to the north of Jami Masjid. The tomb, raised where the Shaikh's *zawiya* or meditation chamber stood, was completed in 1580-81. The main structure is low, consisting of a square exterior, with sides of 7.2 metres, and a mortuary chamber with a diameter of 4.8 metres.



When the tomb was constructed, the interior and exterior was only partly faced with marble, while the verandah and the dome were of red sandstone. Jahangir says that his foster-brother, Qutbuddin Khan Koka, added the outer marble screens, and paved the ambulatory with marble in 1606. In 1866, the external transformation of the tomb was completed by veneering the outside of the dome with marble.





Passing through the entrance, dim light filters through two rows of screens, the burning fragrance of incense sticks and shadows on the cenotaph, evoke even more powerfully an aura of godliness. Here the mighty Mughal emperors and their nobles bowed and prayed with the same respect and devotion as the simplest peasant.

The burial of Sufis and other holy men on the very spot where they led their austere lives is a tradition that still persists in India. Shaikh Salim Chishti was accordingly laid to rest in a crypt beneath his *zawiya*; this was once accessible by a flight of steps but has been walled up for over a century now.

The marble screens encircling the tomb offer a sober yet delicate pattern of hexagons enclosed within an interlacing eight-foil ornament, which in turn enfolds an elaborate eight-pointed star. The early morning sun, striking the verandah through the screens, produces the most beautiful shadow-patterns, and an ethereal light rarely to be experienced elsewhere.

Left:

Original drawing of the painted spandrel inside the *dargah* of Salim Chishti

Jamaat Khana (Tomb of Islam Khan)

To the east of Shaikh Salim's tomb is a red stone structure that originally served as the Jamaat Khana or common religious house for the most distinguished disciples of Shaikh Salim. It is encircled by perforated stone screens partly open to the front, and surmounted by a large dome surrounded by 36 small domed kiosks.

It is conjectured that after the death of Shaikh Hajji Husain, an eminent disciple of Shaikh Salim, the Jamaat Khana became the tomb of the Shaikh's descendants. It is clear

that the building was not originally intended to be Islam Khan's tomb as it has been commonly called, since his grave does not occupy the central place in the tomb.

Between Shaikh Salim's tomb and the Jamaat Khana is another archway. On entering this you find yourself in a dark suite of rooms, known as **Zanana Rauza or Women's Tomb**. Shaikh Salim lived here for a while and women wishing for an audience with the saint could visit him from an underground doorway in the northern wall. Akbar was also known to sit here with his favourites and listen to the holy man's discourses.

Khanqahs

Chishti *khanqahs* in India initially consisted of a single hall with a thatched roof called the Jamaat Khana. Open to all visitors, even Hindu *yogis*, all aspects of Sufi life were conducted within the precincts of the hall.

Shaikh Salim Chishti's first *khanqah* was located next to the Stone Cutters' Mosque, while his family lived nearby.

However, after Akbar built the Jami Masjid, the Shaikh moved to his new *khanqah*. This new *khanqah* consisted of the northern and eastern range of cloisters, the *zawiya* of the Shaikh and a Jamaat Khana for his senior disciples. *Sama* – a musical rendition popularised by Sufis, honouring God and reaching peaks of mystical ecstasy – was held in a secluded hall at the back of the Jamaat Khana.

Chishtis

The Chishtis were a sub-sect of the Sufis. The word Sufi is derived from *suf* or wool, and referred to the flowing woollen robes worn by wandering mendicants. Sufism itself traced its theoretical base to the knowledge imparted by Prophet Mohammed called *Ilm-i-Batin* or renunciation and absolute absorption in the contemplation of God. This was in opposition to the *Ilm-i-Zahir* or Knowledge of Rules as practised by the orthodoxy of the *mullahs*.

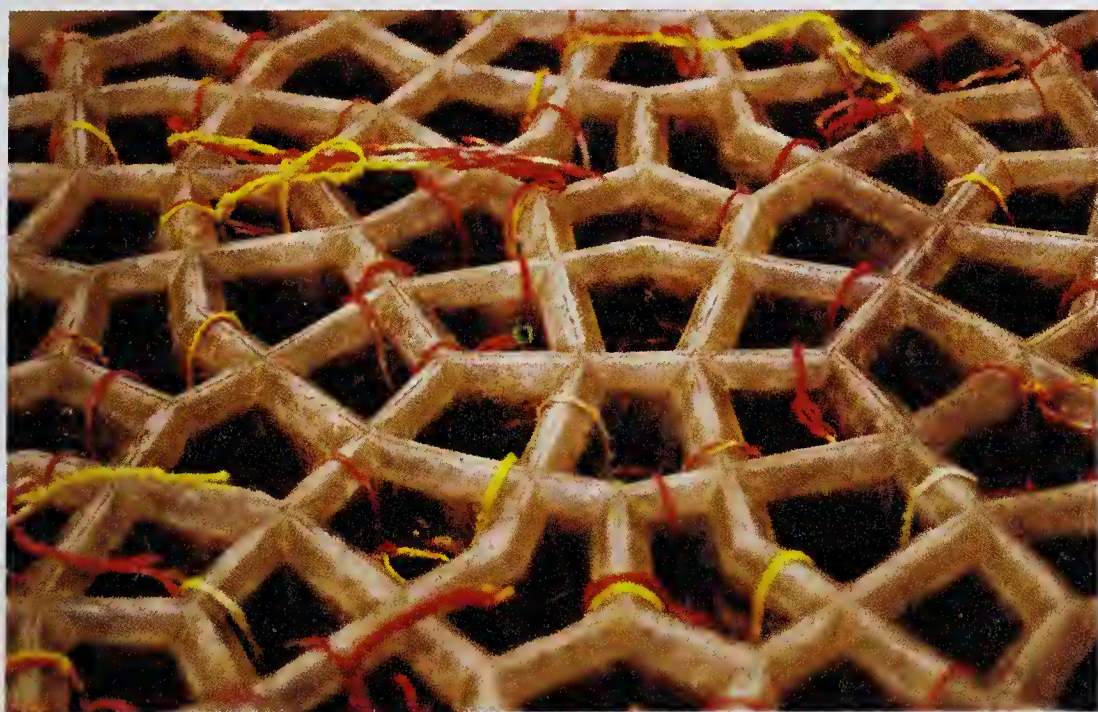
The credit for establishing and popularising Sufism in India goes to Khwaja Muinnudin Chishti of Ajmer. The Chishtis accordingly became the most influential Sufi sect in India. Other famous Chishti saints in the subcontinent included Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki of Mehrauli in Delhi, Khwaja Nizamuddin Aulia of Delhi, Bu Ali Qalandar

Chishti of Karnal and Shaikh Salim Chishti of Fatehpur Sikri.

The *dargah* of Khwaja Muinnudin at Ajmer even today draws large numbers of pilgrims. The Khwaja who came to India at the end of the 10th century was famous for his charity and generosity and was lovingly called Khwaja Gharib Nawaz by both Muslim and Hindu disciples. Shaikh Salim Chishti of Sikri was given the title *Shaikh-ul-Islam* by Emperor Akbar. His prayers are said to have blessed the emperor with several sons. The emperor, in gratitude, built the magnificent Jami Masjid in Sikri. To this day, childless women, both Hindu and Muslim, frequent his *dargah* at Fatehpur Sikri to pray for an offspring.

Below:

Devotees seeking Shaikh Salim Chishti's blessings have traditionally tied threads to the *jalis* of his *dargah*



Buland Darwaza

Buland Darwaza, or literally Lofty Gate, one of the monumental structures of Akbar's reign, has often been described as his most arrogant assertion of imperial power. This magnificent gate dominates the southern side of the Jami Masjid and is visible from a great distance.

Buland Darwaza is an imposing structure with a height of 40 metres, added to which, the 12 metres of steps leading to it makes the entire composition rise 52 metres above the road.

In style it is somewhat dissimilar to other parts of Fatehpur Sikri. Though it has many Hindu embellishments, Tillotson says that 'its

Below:

Buland Darwaza or the Lofty Gate



severe pointed arches and simple geometry of basic form mark a return to the more usual approach of early Mughal architecture – to the style of Humayun's Tomb'.

To construct an entrance of human proportions in a structure of such vast height required careful planning. To avoid any

dissonance, the architect took the same course as with the Badshahi Darwaza: the principal arch stands in the midst of the three projecting sides of an octagon centered upon the apex of the dome in the entrance hallway. The central projecting face carries a great arch while the faces looking south-east and south-west on either side are



broken into three tiers. Crowning the whole is a handsome perforated parapet behind which rises a range of kiosks.

Structurally, the design of the great archway can be divided into two aspects: the front facade along with its portal and the rear facade consisting of a lower and plainer portion, which intrudes into the main courtyard. The front design provides for the sheer immensity of proportions. Three horizontal panels of buff stone prevent an illusion

of the topmost point of the frame bearing down too heavily.

Decorated simply, the plain red sandstone spandrels are framed in white marble. At the apex of the central arch is a flower-like ornament inlaid in white marble, and a flattish rosette on either side. Within the three great cartouches are verses from the *Quran*, in bold Naksh letters. The lettering and carving are both exquisite.

Right:
Jami Masjid

Recent Excavations at Fatehpur Sikri

Fatehpur Sikri is situated on the banks of an ancient lake where several ancient sites were excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India. Birchhabili Tila, on the eastern bank of the lake was excavated during 1999-2000 to trace the pre-Babur history and archaeology of the area.

A large number of Jaina sculptures with inscriptions were discovered along with a unique sculpture of a Jaina Sruti Sarasvati (VS 1067/AD 1010) which also bears an inscription on the pedestal. A stone fragment bearing two letters in Brahmi script in Sanskrit language was also found at the site.

The Mughal ruler Akbar shifted his capital to Sikri

from 1571 to 1585. Recently in the compound of the Khwabgah, a red sandstone storage jar has been identified with the help of contemporary sources and has been partially restored. This jar measures 12 feet in height and 8 feet in diameter and has been mentioned as Abdar Khana (Ganga Sagar), meant for storing water from the river Ganga.

The recent scientific clearance work conducted at Anup Talao revealed an underground corridor and a chamber, suggesting the existence of a Kasana (cool place) which has been mentioned in contemporary Persian records. These discoveries have added a new chapter to the history and archaeology of Fatehpur Sikri.

On the side of the central archway, to the right, as one passes into the Jami Masjid there is a famous inscription dated 1601, partly in Persian and partly in Arabic, announcing Akbar's victory in Khandesh. Some historians conjecture from this inscription that the Buland Darwaza was constructed to commemorate Akbar's capture of Asir, Burhanpur and Ahmadnagar that year.

Rizvi believes that Buland Darwaza celebrates the conquest of Gujarat. Akbar's lightning expedition to Gujarat in June 1573 to quell rebellion met with immediate success. On his triumphant return, Akbar renamed Sikri, Fatehpur or the City of Victory. According to some other historians, Akbar demolished the existing main gateway of the mosque and raised the Buland Darwaza in its place.



Environs of Jami Masjid

The visitor standing at the top of the steps leading to the Buland Darwaza, will see right ahead the **Jhalra** or the rain-water reservoir, its eight arcaded sides, each 10.4 metres long, lined with smooth red stone. The colonnade of forty columns which once surrounded it has all but disappeared. Once, young boys used to dive into its waters from the north-western wall of the mosque for a pittance. This practice has, however, been banned.

An imposing *hammam*, called **Zera Hammam**, supposedly built by Nawab Islam Khan for public use, faces the Buland Darwaza and offers an attractive view of the great portal.





Outside the south-east wall of the Jami Masjid are large but ruined vaults generally believed to be the **Langar Khana** or public kitchen meant for feeding the poor.

Controversy surrounds the actual occupants of the quarters near the new *khanqah* of Shaikh Salim to the north of Jami Masjid. They are popularly referred to as the **Princes' Nursery** because Akbar is said to have had them built for his infant sons, Salim and Murad, to give them easy proximity to the Shaikh.

Some historians assign these two houses and the attached baths to **Abul Fazl** (1551-1602) and **Faizi** (1547-1595). This seems unlikely as Abul Fazl was presented in the court of Akbar only in 1575. However in 1580, when

Fazl became a member of the emperor's coterie, the princes had already been allotted separate establishments. So, it is possible that these houses were given to Abul Fazl and his brother Faizi. These houses are the best-preserved early Mughal domestic buildings and contain some valuable decorative features.

To the west of Jami Masjid are some historically interesting monuments which are not a part of the local guides' itinerary but are well worth visiting. These include:

Stone Cutters' Mosque

Around 1565, the quarrymen working the ridge for stone for Agra Fort built a small mosque of five bays for Shaikh Salim Chishti. The dark red stone

Left:
Langar Khana
outside the
south-east
wall of
Jami Masjid

Below:
Princes'
Nursery
popularly
known as
Abul Fazl
and Faizi's
house





Above:
Stone Cutters' Mosque, one of the oldest monuments in Fatehpur Sikri, was built for Shaikh Salim Chishti by local quarrymen

was quarried from its immediate neighbourhood. The single cusped arch of the present nine-arched facade, 18 metres long, is the central arch of this mosque; behind it is a richly ornamented *mihrab* with a crude *mimbar* of five steps to the right.

Inside the Stone Cutters' Mosque, are arched recesses in the form of horseshoes on either side of the prayer-niches, and lamp-stands of rustic appearance. Such and other features show that the devoted builders were not all expert stonemasons.

Opposite the north-west corner of the mosque, is the door to the courtyard of **Shaikh Salim's House** which has been subsequently rebuilt.

The house, where the Shaikh originally lived

is still inhabited by his lineal descendants. It contains fine stone screens and has, on the first storey, two facing pavilions with stone roofs carved in herringbone patterns. Though altered internally in 1810, the facade of the building has been preserved.

Rang Mahal

Akbar built this historic building in 1569, for the mother of Prince Salim so that the queen could spend the months of her pregnancy close to Shaikh Salim Chishti. This beautiful building was in private hands for many centuries until it was acquired by the Government of India under Lord Curzon. The south-western wing of the building is a five minute walk from the Stone Cutters' Mosque and ought to be visited. Both the northern and southern doorways are



Above:
**Detail from
a pillar in
Rang Mahal**

finely worked, the floreate cusplings on the arches proceed from the open mouths of small elephants. The principal colonnade in the remaining wing has tall double columns with stylised peacocks' tail bases. From the pavilion on the first floor, one gets a remarkable view of the southern wall of

the mosque and the Buland Darwaza.

Walking westward along the edge of the ridge, one comes to **Shaikh Ibrahim's Mosque**. Perched on the very edge of the ridge, its site is one of the most striking in Fatehpur.

The facade which resembles the Stone Cutters' Mosque has a most unusual feature in that the mosque is not aligned with the *qibla*. Instead, it takes advantage of its position to catch the cooling afternoon breezes through openings in the walls.

Below:
**A view of the interiors
of Rang Mahal,
used by Jahangir's mother
during her pregnancy**



Hiran Minar and Waterworks

The waterworks down the road from Hathi Pol



Going down a steeply descending road from Hathi Pol the visitor observes, to his right, a group of rubble buildings topped with low domes. A single deep well here is flanked by two chambers in which men once turned a treadmill which raised the water.

A *baoli* or step-well lies to the right. The northern and southern upper chambers of the *baoli* have below their domed ceilings great beams that took the upward thrust of the revolving windlasses.



The windlasses were turned by men, not animals, who worked ceaselessly at them. Other workers, standing on the roof emptied buckets on to the slope of the roof, which conducted the water into a water tower through an aqueduct.

Next, the water was lifted from the storage well to an aqueduct atop a rubble-built wall, and ran northward towards Hathi Pol. In the subsequent stage the water was again raised to the bastion-like building projecting from the wall. It was then drawn up to the roof of the arcade between the eastern wall of Hathi Pol and the road. This brought the water roughly to the level of the pavement of the extensive minor Haram Sara quarters.

On the northern side of the gateway it was raised a fifth time and emptied into several channels. One channel lead to the bath in what is called Maryam's Garden, another to the garden itself, and another past the Wind Tower towards the central Haram Sara palace, where it would have supplied the fountain in the centre of the court. Anup Talao was also supplied from these waterworks, with the overflow going to Hauz-i-Shirin.

In the pavement east of Daulat Khana is a large stone tank. The tank was probably used to perfume the water, by mixing oils, essences and fragrant herbs. The scented water would have flowed on to the *hammam*, and might even have been carried in ewers to the bath behind the Khwabgah.

Hiran Minar

Further downhill from Hathi Pol is Hiran Minar. Abul Fazl mentions that in all Mughal camps a lamp was lit on a tall pole and Hiran Minar might well have been lit up at night by small lamps. Others conjecture that the Minar was used to display hunting trophies.

The tower is entered through a flat-topped doorway, on either side of which is a blind arch. The spandrel on the Minar is finely decorated with a small pattern of rosettes.

From the kiosk on the top, a spectacular view can be had of the palaces of the Haram Sara, the northern wall of Jami Masjid and the towering Buland Darwaza, and, over the now-dry bed of the lake, to the water-palaces.

Right:
It is believed that the tusk-like protrusions on Hiran Minar were used to hang lamps to light the way for travellers



Hada Mahal and Qush Khana, are a long walk away and are best driven to.

The former is a two-storeyed octagonal *baradari* surmounted by a kiosk with very slender columns, while the latter, a red sandstone pleasure

palace is popularly known as Qush Khana or falcons' mews.

The **caravanserai** shows good workmanship and remains in a reasonable state of repair. The central court surrounded by vaulted rooms is newly planted with pomegranate trees.

Below:

The caravanserai and the Hiran Minar beyond it, are visible from the top of Hathi Pol



The corner suites are self-contained, built around a large courtyard which is lit from above.

The red sandstone house called **Darogha's House**, on the western end of the upper range of the ridge has painted interiors. On the slope

to the west is the **Samosa Mahal** which gets its name from the stuffed Indian pastry called *samosa*. The real name and original purpose of this building are unknown. The effect of the colonnade around the triangular courtyard is quite interesting.



Hammams

The Romans are widely credited with developing public baths. This luxury of the ancient world acquired a new dimension when combined with Muslim religious sanctity: the *Quran* lists several occasions when its followers are called upon to bathe themselves. Baths or *hammams* thus became an integral part of Muslim city planning.

Hammams first came to India from Central Asia during the Sultanate period, but it was only with the arrival of the Mughals that the *hammam* acquired a pronounced importance in the social fabric of medieval life.

Babur, the first Mughal emperor, expressed, in his memoirs, a disappointment at the paucity of baths in India. Remarking that 'baths were the means of removing all three (heat, dust and hot wind) inconveniences...', one of his first acts in India was to issue orders for the construction of baths.

Akbar and his nobles also placed an extraordinary importance on baths. This is documented by contemporary historians including Abul Fazl who considered *hammams* to be of equal importance to benevolent institutions like *khanqahs* and *madrasas*, while Badauni says *hammams* were second only to *bazaars* among the public works of the emperor at Fatehpur Sikri.



It is said that Akbar spent three *gharis* (a little over one hour) bathing and dressing and also that he had a portable bath fitted on an elephant to serve him when he was travelling.

The *hammams* at Fatehpur Sikri constitute what is probably the largest surviving concentration of *hammams* in Mughal India. At Fatehpur Sikri, one of the grandest and largest *hammams* are the Hakims' Hammam. This majestic structure with delicate stucco work and golden paintings occupies an area 105 metres by 78 metres, and was, in all probability, a part of the royal Haram Sara.



Above:

**Exquisitely painted interiors
of the Hakims' Hammam**

In Jahangir's time, it seems the emperor gave private audience in the *ghusalkhanah*, an offshoot of the *hammam*. The English traveller Thomas Roe, in fact, says that a private meeting with the king in the *ghusalkhanah* was the most opportune time to get a favour from him.

Archaeologists say that the materials used in the construction of *hammams* were of better quality than those used for the houses of noblemen. And this is the reason why in Fatehpur Sikri the houses of noblemen have

mostly collapsed, while the *hammams* remain, by and large, intact.

The construction techniques and interior decorations of a *hammam* were quite appropriate to the function of the building – painted interiors, tanks filled with cold water, and bubbling fountains meant that even on an oppressively hot day in the arid plains of north India, one felt comfortable within its cool environs.

In winters, the reverse became true: by filling the tanks with hot water, a person could escape the cold and also enjoy a warm bath in the *hammam*.

Baths and Well on the Southern Side

The emperor's private baths (popularly referred to as Turkish Sultana's baths) are housed in a grim-looking, plastered structure east of the Turkish Sultana's Pavilion. Scented water came from the stone tank connected with northern waterworks, while the main supply was from the southern waterworks. On the inside, the *hammams* are plastered throughout; dadoes in red, yellow, and greenish black on a white background survive. There are fine patterns on the ceilings.

Hakims' Hammam

Right below the Daftar Khana lie the Principal Court Baths also known as Hakims' Hammam. The domes of the baths

come into view while descending from Daftar Khana. Containing some of the finest specimens of plaster art in Fatehpur Sikri, these baths appear too grand to have been built by the three Hakims of Gilan whose house lies above them to the north-east.

These were probably royal baths. They contain a dressing room, a steam room, and rooms for hot and cold plunge baths, two large rooms probably for massage and a latrine, all finely plastered.

A well on the south-east corner supplied water, which was carried up a ramp by men with skin bags or pulled up over a pulley on stone piers and emptied out on the roof, whence it flowed into a vast masonry tank within the building.

Below:
**Entrance
leading to
Hakims'
Hammam**



Shah Quli's Baoli

A deep well, octagonal, with three galleried storeys and two windlasses lies further south. Shah Quli (1601) is popularly believed to have built this step-well. Water was raised from the *baoli* in five stages by the method used in the northern waterworks. Beyond Daftar Khana, however, the conduits have been obliterated. A branch may have led to the principal court baths.

Sukh Tal

Sukh Tal (Sweet Tank) is 6.4 metres deep and the largest tank in Fatehpur. It lies opposite the principal court baths and below Daftar Khana. Made of stone masonry, it has a ramp ending in a flight of steps.

Sikka Tal is a misnomer given to it by those who think Akbar's famous largesse of coins was poured out here and not in the Anup Talao.

This Sukh Tal must not be confused with the much smaller Hauz-i Shirin (also meaning Sweet Tank) on the northern side of the Diwan-i-Am, near the imperial kitchens.

Monuments of the Southern Environs

The area between the modern town and the distant city walls was once strewn with mansions and gardens of noblemen, pavilions, stables, caravanserais and *bazaars*. Most of these buildings have been reduced to ruins.

Between the **Terha Darwaza** and the Gwalior gate, stands an octagonal pavilion. Tradition calls it **Raja Todar Mal's Baradari**; no evidence beyond this is known. The Raja (1515?-1589) was Akbar's financial adviser for over 25 years, and introduced a number of administrative reforms of far-reaching importance.

Outside the Terha Darwaza is one of the prettiest spots in Fatehpur Sikri. Large and ancient tamarind trees shade the road. Here stand the **Mosque and Tomb of Bahauddin** within a low enclosure wall. Bahauddin was one of those employed to build Fatehpur Sikri. Local legend gives him the title 'overseer of the works'.

Bahauddin must have acquired a comfortable fortune, though he seems to have had neither title nor rank and calls himself *chuna paz* (lime-burner) of Emperor Jahangir.

Both the mosque and tomb are of red

sandstone and important architecturally because they show interesting developments in style and decoration, different from other buildings of Fatehpur Sikri. The dome on the tomb resembles the one on Shaikh Salim Chishti's



tomb before it was covered with marble in the nineteenth century, but lacks the elegance of the latter.

Visitors who travel by the Bharatpur road may stop at Akbar's Terah Mori barrage for an unforgettable view of

the splendid silhouette of Fatehpur Sikri.

To the right, on a ruined platform, is the red sandstone tomb of Shaikh Musa, the brother of Shaikh Salim Chishti.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Arriving in India

When to come to India



The best time to come to India, especially if you are planning to visit Fatehpur Sikri and Agra, is between October and March. During the winter months of December and January, the day temperature in the plains of north India is around 18°C (64°F) and could go down to 4°C (39°F) at night.

The summer months of May and June are hot, and the temperature can rise as high as 46°C (115°F). After the scorching heat, the monsoons arrive towards the end of June and the rainy season stretches till September.

Before coming to India

Visa

There are three kinds of visas for tourists.

1. **The 15-day single/double-entry transit visa.** This visa is valid for 30 days from the date of its issue.
2. **The 3-month multiple-entry visa.** This visa is valid for 90 days from the date of first entry into India, which must be within 30 days from the date of its issue.
3. **The 6-month multiple-entry visa.** This visa is valid for 180 days from the date of its issue, not from the date of entry into India.

Health



Your health during your travel in India depends on three things: Precautions taken before arrival, day-to-day health care, and efficiency in tackling emergencies.

Precautionary medication is the best bet against common ailments like diarrhoea, dysentery and malaria. Malaria is a problem in India during the rainy season. So, if you are coming at that time of the year, do consult your doctor for precautionary anti-malarial medication. While in India, use mosquito repellent ointment.

If you are not already vaccinated against Hepatitis B, get it done before travelling.

Those not accustomed to Indian conditions are usually vulnerable to stomach problems. It is advisable to seek qualified medical advice before travelling and to carry your own first-aid kit.

Delhi, and even Agra, have many government as well as privately run hospitals and nursing homes. The government hospitals have modern medical facilities but due to large patient turnout, medical assistance is slow.

Arriving in Delhi



For the international traveller, Delhi is the closest entry-point to Agra. The Delhi airport is called the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGI). It has two terminals: **Terminal 1** for domestic flights and **Terminal 2** for international ones. Terminal 2 is located about 19 kms from the city centre at

Connaught Place and is equipped with all modern facilities; while Terminal 1 is the old airport, basic but efficient and is located 12 kms away from the city centre.

Money

Indian Currency

Indian currency is called the Rupee. It is available in denominations of 1000, 500, 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 2, 1. One rupee equals 100 paise. Coins in common use are those of Rs 5, Rs 2, Re 1 and 50 and 25 paise. The 20, 10 and 5 paise coins have become redundant in big cities, but they still have value in smaller towns and in rural India. Be careful not to accept soiled notes.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are becoming increasingly popular in urban areas. All major international credit cards are used – Visa, Amex, Mastercard.

Banks

Banks are open from 10 am to 2 pm Monday to Friday and 10 am to 12 pm Saturdays. Banks are closed on Sundays and national holidays. Most international banks have several branches in Delhi and Agra. Most banks, Indian as well as international have installed ATM counters in various central locations.

E-mail

Internet and e-mail access are easily available. There are many cybercafes even in small towns where for a nominal amount you can access the Net.

Arriving in Fatehpur Sikri

Only 237 kms from Delhi and 37 kms from Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, is a fascinating destination for tourists, both Indian and foreign. A veritable ghost town, it has been so for over 400 years now. The sudden demise of the city within 14 years of its inception represents an enigma that has never really been solved. Its many extant monuments are magnificent expressions of a time when it was peopled and alive.

Fatehpur Sikri is an hour's drive from Agra. So it is best to book rooms in Agra where there are better places to stay, and then proceed to Fatehpur Sikri where accommodation is rather limited. In fact, a better option would be to spend a day in Agra, visit the Taj, the Fort and other monuments there and stop by Fatehpur Sikri the next day. From here you can proceed to Bharatpur just 19 kms away.

The internationally renowned bird sanctuary, the Keoladeo Ghana National Park is situated here. Accommodation is easily available in Bharatpur to suit all budgets.

The best months to visit Fatehpur Sikri, as indeed any part of north India, are October to March. However early mornings and evenings remain pleasant even in the summer months.

Guided Tours

ITDC runs a Package Tour starting at 7 am from Connaught Circus in New Delhi, which goes to Agra and Fatehpur Sikri, returning to Delhi at 9.30 pm.

Ph 011-3320331, 3322386

For tourists without prior bookings, conducted tours to Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri are run daily by UP State Tourism Development Corporation. Bookings and reservations can be made at Hotel Taj Khema near Taj Mahal's eastern gate.

Ph 330140

STD Codes

Fatehpur Sikri	05619
Agra	0562
Delhi	011

Arriving by Air



Agra airport at Kheria is the nearest airstrip to Fatehpur Sikri. It is 6 kms from the centre of Agra town. From the airport you can book pre-paid taxis for the entire day (8 hours) which will include a trip to the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri (the charge is 25 per cent more for air-conditioned vehicles).

Air Connections

Alliance Air has a direct flight from Delhi to Agra four days a week; while Jet Airways has daily flights.

Airlines Offices in Agra

Indian Airlines

Hotel Clarks Shiraz

54 Taj Road

Ph 360948

Airport Ph 301180-84

Jet Airways

Hotel Clarks Shiraz

54 Taj Road

Ph 360303, 267944

Arriving by Train



The Taj Express and the Shatabdi Express run daily to Agra from Delhi. The Taj Express, which leaves Delhi at 7.15 am from the Nizamuddin Station reaches Agra at 9.50 am. This is best suited to day-trippers on guided tours organised by the Government of India Tourist Office.

Tourist Information Centres

Agra

UP Govt. Tourist Office

64 Raj Road **Ph** 360517

Govt. of India Tourist Office

191 The Mall

Ph 363959/363377

UP Govt. Tourist Reception Counter

Agra Cantt

Ph 364439, 368598

Delhi

UP Tourism Office

Chandralok Building,

36 Janpath

Connaught Place

Ph 011-3322251

Fax 011-3711296

ITDC

Scope Building,

Core 8, 7 Lodhi Road

Ph 011-4360303

Fax 011-4360233

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The tour operators pick passengers up from the Agra Cantonment station and the tour itinerary includes a visit to the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri, returning to the station to catch the Taj Express for Delhi at 6.35 pm.

Alternatively, if you have a little extra time you can take the superfast train, Shatabdi Express, which leaves Delhi at 6 am and sets off from Agra at 8.18 pm. Cars are available for hire at the railway station in Agra. With an early start, it is possible to fit in Agra and Fatehpur Sikri in the same day. However, this would make for a very tight visit. Some local trains also leave from Agra Fort and take an hour to reach Fatehpur Sikri.

Railway Enquiry

Agra Cantt **Ph** 131
Reservation 364519/364131
Agra City **Ph** 132
Reservation 364163

Arriving by Road



If you are driving to Fatehpur Sikri by your car/taxi there are two routes you can take – one is to go to Agra and then proceed to Fatehpur Sikri; the second route is via the by-pass just after Mathura, which goes to Bharatpur (58 kms), from where Fatehpur Sikri is 19 kms. This road, however, is quite patchy and the first is a better option since a well-maintained eight-lane highway, National Highway 2, connects Agra and Delhi. The 200 km journey takes barely four hours by car. The traffic in Agra city itself can, however, be rather chaotic.

Buses from Delhi's Sarai Kale Khan Inter State Bus Terminus (ISBT) are run on an hourly basis to Agra. Similarly, there is an hourly bus service, through the day, from Agra to Delhi from Agra's Idgah Bus Terminal. Frequent buses (half-hourly) also leave Agra for Fatehpur Sikri and take less than an hour. Most buses deliver visitors to the main entrance and car park near the Buland Darwaza, from where the deserted city is a five-minute walk uphill.

While travelling down the highway connecting Agra to Fatehpur Sikri and going ahead to Bharatpur, you will witness a strange sight – scraggly bears with their equally impoverished owners standing on the sides of the road. The muzzled bears are forcibly made to perform tricks to attract the attention of tourists and earn the odd buck for their stick-wielding owners. Please do not stop your car, as this will encourage these men to continue making a living out of a practice, which is barbaric, to say the least.

Roadways enquiry

UP State Road Transport Corpn

Bus Stand, Idgah
Ph 366124/367543

UP State Road Transport Corpn

Bus Stand, Opposite Power House **Ph** 364557

Rajasthan State Transport Corpn

Sheetal Tourist Home
Near Idgah Bus Stand
Ph 369420

Where to Stay in Fatehpur Sikri

Given below are names of a few hotels:

Price range in rupees for a standard double room

- A** Above 6000
- B** 4000-6000
- C** 2500-4000
- D** 1500-2500
- E** Below 1500

Gulistan Tourist Complex (UP Tourism)

Ph 882490

E

Maurya Rest House

Ph 882643

E

Rang Mahal Guest House

Ph 883020

E

Hotel Red Palace

Ph 882637

E

Goverdhan Tourist Complex

Ph 882643

E

Important Road Distances from Fatehpur Sikri

Agra 37 kms
Bharatpur 19 kms
Delhi 237 kms

Where to Stay in Agra

Amarvilas

Taj East Gate Road
Taj Nagari Scheme
Ph 231515
Fax 231516

A

Jaypee Palace

Fatehabad Road
Ph 330800
Fax 330850

A

Mughal Sheraton

Fatehabad Road

Ph 331701-728

Fax 331730

A

Taj View

Fatehabad Road

Taj Ganj

Ph 331841-59

Fax 331860

B

Mansingh Palace

Fatehabad Road

Ph 331771

Fax 330202

B

Clarks Shiraz

54 Taj Road

Ph 361421

Fax 361428

B

Agra Ashok

6B Mall Road

Ph 361223-32

Fax 361620

B

Atithi

Fatehabad Road

Ph 330879-84

Fax 330878

D

Amar

Fatehabad Road

Ph 331885-89

Fax 330299

D

Tourist Bungalow

(UP Tourism)

Station Road

Raja ka Mandi

Ph 350120/351720

E

Taj Khema

(UP Tourism)

East Gate of Taj Mahal

Ph 330140

C

Where to Shop

In Fatehpur Sikri there is nothing much for the tourist

to buy – though a scattering of shops behind the Jami Masjid sell marble inlay artefacts from Agra.

Agra is also known for its exquisite hand-woven carpets, and *zardozi* embroidery on garments as well as leather goods. Food buffs can enjoy Agra's mouth-watering variety of sweet delicacies like *petha*, *gajak* and popular salted snacks like *dalmoth*. Some of the major shopping centres/shopping complexes in Agra are:

- Sadar Bazaar
- Kinari Bazaar
- Gwalior Road
- Mahatma Gandhi Road
- Partap Pura

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GLOSSARY

azan call to prayer sounded by a *muezzin* before every *namaz*

badgir Persian name for tall tower designed to catch the breeze

bagh garden

baoli step-well

baradari pillared portico or pavilion; columned building

birka reservoir, cistern

chahar suq bazaar crossing; an open square with four arched doorways or gates at the intersection of two *bazaar* streets or inserted in a single *bazaar* street

chhajja overhanging eaves

charbagh four-fold garden; a formal Mughal garden

charpai string bed

corbels blocks of stone projecting from a wall

cusp projecting point between small arcs of an archway

dado the finishing of the lower part of an interior wall from floor to about waist height

darbar the royal court; an audience chamber

darwaza literally door, but generally denotes a large gateway, as in a city gateway

engrailed foliated, cusped; an arch having an arch within its curves

farman imperial orders stamped with the royal seal

Hakim wise man; scholar; title given to learned men

hammam bath-house; consisting of a group of rooms for the various stages of the bathing procedure

haram 'forbidden (by religious law)'

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iwan large arched recess, especially one containing an entrance

jalīs literally net; perforated stone-screen

jharokha window embrasures

khass tattīs screens made from dry aromatic grass upon which water is sprinkled to cool rooms

khanqah common dwelling for disciples of Sufi saints

khazana treasury

Khwabgah literally House of Dreams; sleeping-pavilion of a Mughal emperor

khutba recitation; a discourse generally preached by the *imam* at the Friday prayer

kothi a house made of baked brick or stone

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madrasa a school, especially one associated with a mosque

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mansabdar literally rank-holder; one holding a *mansab* in the Mughul bureaucracy; loosely, a nobleman.

mardana men's quarters in a palace or house

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mandala ritual drawings which represent the cosmos; in architecture, a group of buildings arranged at cardinal points around a sacred central point

mihrab niche or arched recesses in the western wall of an Indian mosque, towards which the worshippers turn for prayers

Naskh Arabic script developed in the 10th century

piers a supporting mass other than a column

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sama song and music performed by Sufis intended to produce spiritual ecstasy

Shaikh an old and venerable man; a man learned in Islamic law

spandrel the triangular space between the curve of an arch and the square enclosing it

squinch a device of arches placed diagonally at the upper angles of a square chamber with the aim of turning it into an octagon and then capping it with a dome

talao a tank; generally provided with masonry steps

zawiya meditation chamber of Sufi saints

zanana women's apartments

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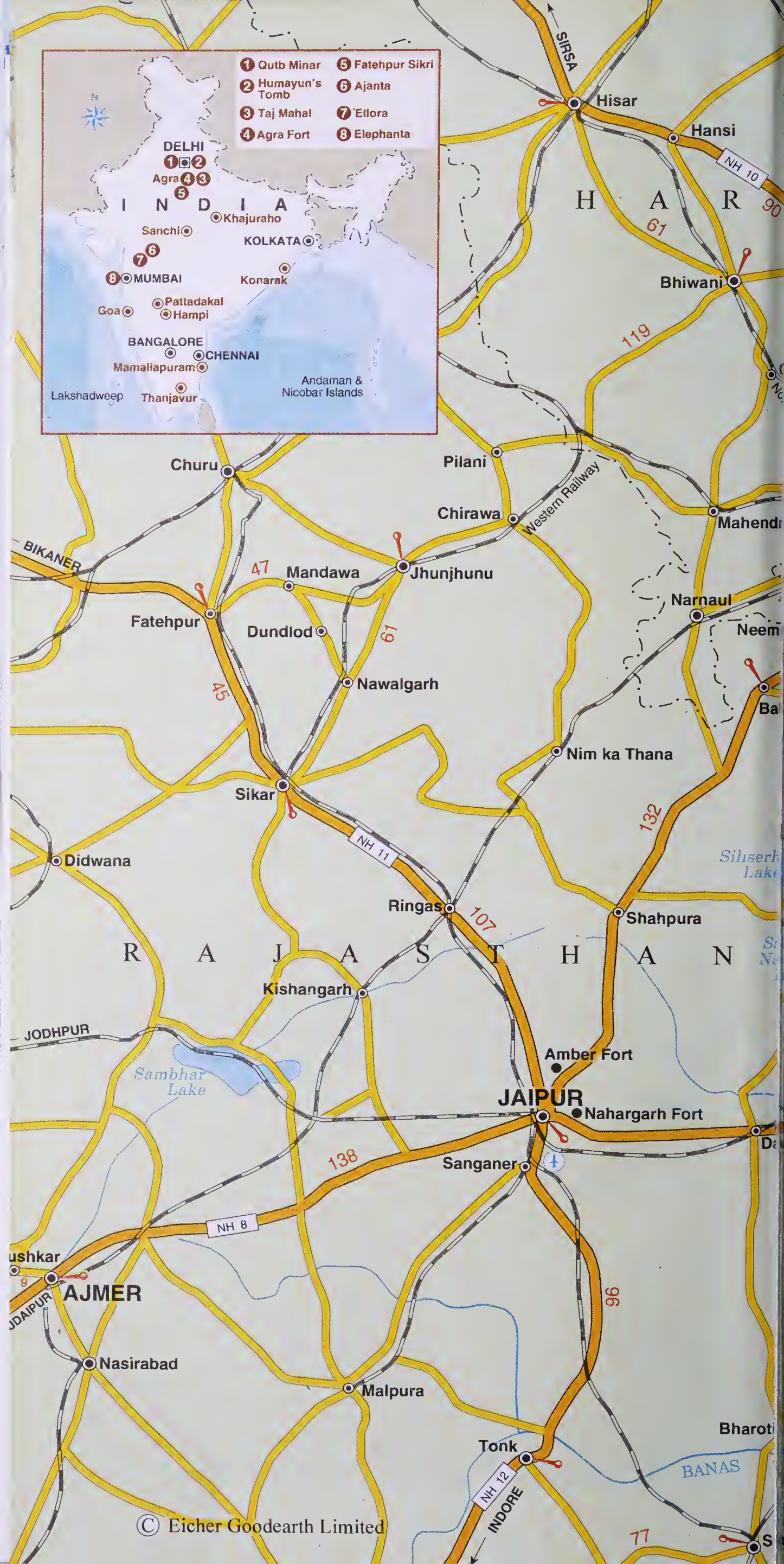
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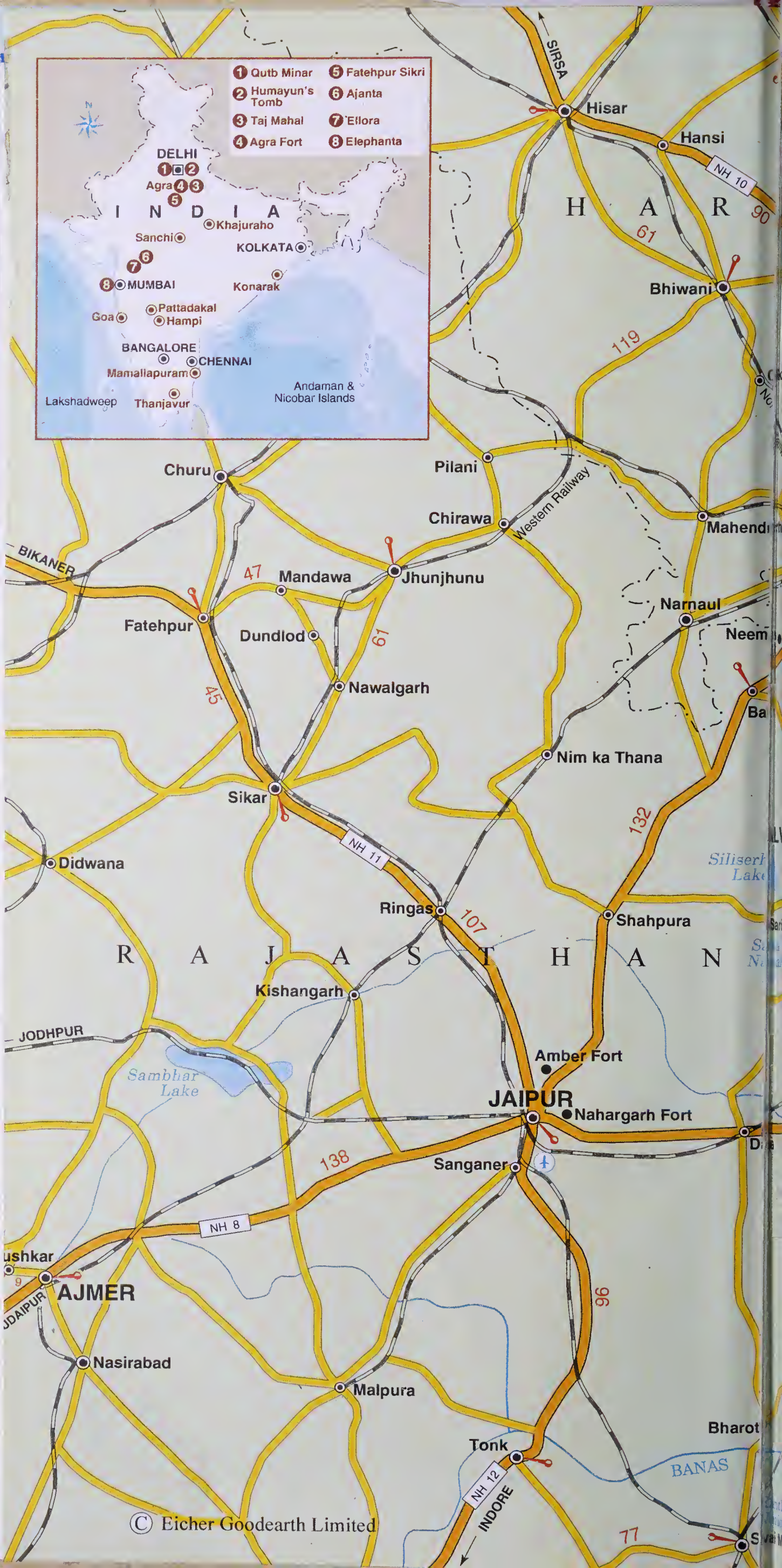




LEGEND

 Qutb Minar	 Heritage Site
	Inter-State Boundary
	Railway Line
 NH 2	National Highway
	Other Roads
	Airport

NOT TO SCALE



FATEHPUR SIKRI

Fatehpur Sikri was built by Akbar as his imperial capital but was suddenly abandoned after 14 years. The complex houses a range of palaces and pavilions built in the Mughal architectural style and for a variety of purposes.

There is a story attached, often not strictly true, to almost all the buildings in Fatehpur Sikri; but this only adds to the charm of the place. Turkish Sultana's Pavilion, Jodh Bai's Palace, Birbal's House are superb examples of Akbar's fusion style of architecture.

Among the other buildings at Fatehpur Sikri, the Diwan-i-Khass with its intricately-carved central pillar, the pyramidal Panch Mahal and the imposing Buland Darwaza deserve special mention.

Visitors are advised to stay the night at Fatehpur Sikri to fully savour the medieval city's splendour and to watch the peacocks dance in the faint light of the early morning.



Kasturi Gupta Menon
Director General
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

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